

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 01733054 9

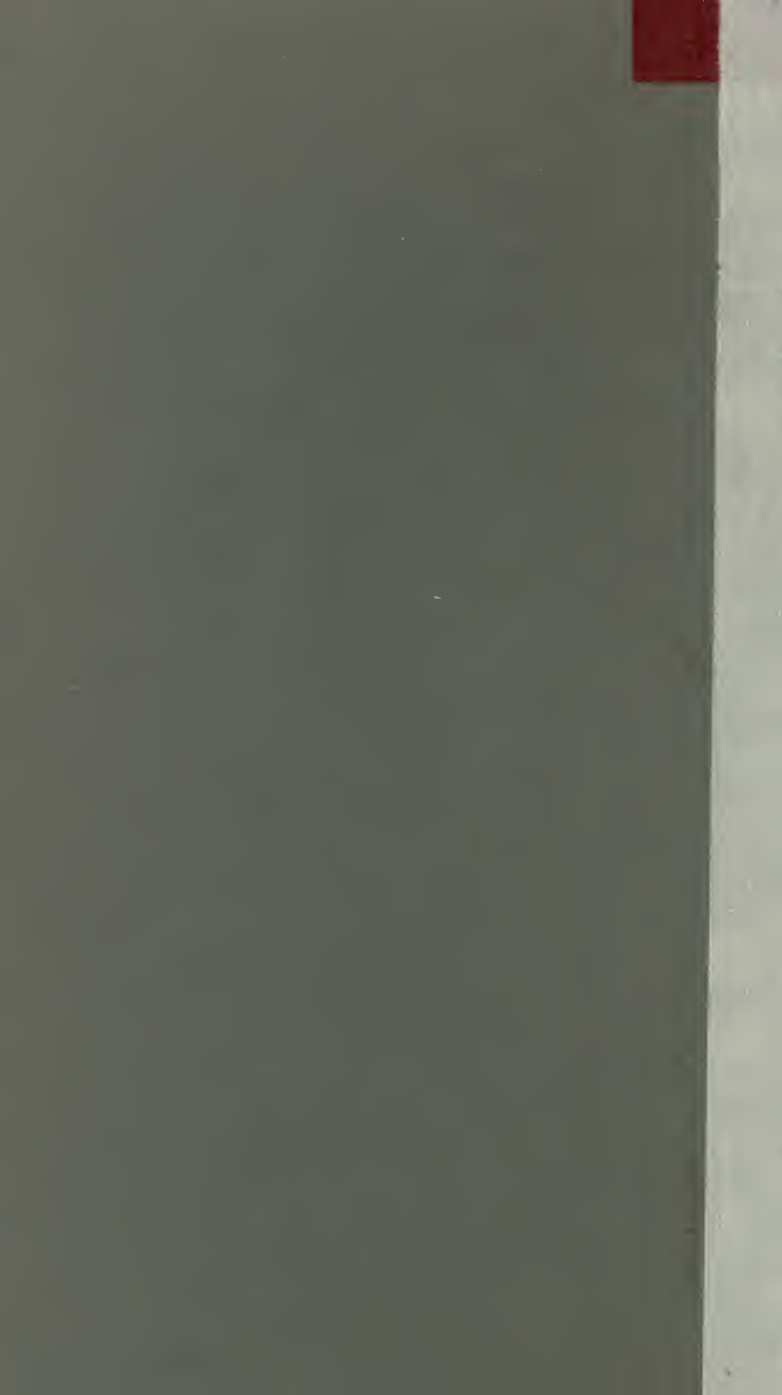
Alison, (Sir) Archiball  
Free trade and protection

HF

2044

A584

1844



[*Reprinted for the Agricultural Protection Society.*]

FREE TRADE  
AND  
PROTECTION.

BY

ARCHIBALD ALISON, F.R.S.,

AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF EUROPE DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION."

"Experience is the great test of truth, and is perpetually contradicting the theories of men."—JOHNSON.

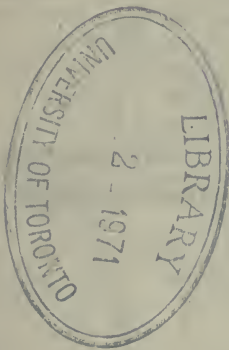
"The home trade is worth all the foreign trade in the world put together."

DR ADAM SMITH.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS,  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

M.DCCC.XLIV.

HF  
2044  
A584  
1844



ON THE

# NECESSITY

OF

# AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION

FOR THE

# CULTIVATORS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

WHOEVER has travelled in the highlands of Scotland, or the mountains of Wales, must have observed the remarkable difference which exists between artificial plantations and the natural woods of the country. Planted *all at once*, the former grow up of uniform height, and their trees present nearly the same form and symmetry. Sown at different periods, with centuries between their growth, the latter exhibit every variety of age and form, from the decaying patriarchs of the forest, which have survived the blasts of some hundred years, to the infant sapling, which is only beginning to shoot under the shelter of a projecting rock or stem. Nor is the difference less remarkable in the room which is severally afforded for growth, in the artificial plantations and in the wilds of nature. The larches or firs, in the stiff and angular inclosure, are always crowded together; and, if not thinned by the care of the forester, will inevitably choke each other, or shoot up thin and unhealthy, in consequence of their close proximity to each other, and the dense mass of foliage which overshadows the upper part of the wood. But no such danger need be apprehended in the natural forest. No woodman is called to thin its denizens—no forester's eye is required to tell which should be left, and which cut away, in the vast array. In the ceaseless warfare of the stronger with the weaker, the feeble plants are entirely destroyed. In vain the infant sapling

attempts to contend with the old oak, the branches of which overshadow its growth—it is speedily crushed in the struggle. Nor are the means of removing the useless remains less effectual. The hand of Nature insensibly clears the waste of its encumbrances; the weakness of time brings them to the ground when their allotted period is expired; and youth, as in the generations of men, springs beside the decay of age, and finds ample room for expansion over the fallen remains of its paternal stems.

The difference between the artificial plantation and the natural wood, illustrates the distinction between the imaginary communities which the political economist expects to see grow up, in conformity with his theories, and acting in obedience to his dictates, and the nations of flesh and blood which exist around us, of which we form a part, and which are immediately affected by ill-judged or inapplicable measures of commercial regulation. Nations were planted by the hand of Nature; they were not sown, nor their place allotted by human foresight. They exist often close to each other, and under apparently the same physical circumstances, under every possible variety of character, age, and period of growth. The difference even between those ruled by the same government, and inhabited apparently by the same race, is prodigious. Who could suppose that the Dutchman, methodical, calculating, persevering, was next neighbour to the fiery, warlike, and impetuous Frenchman? Or that the southern and western Irish, vehement, impassioned, and volatile, came from the same stock which pervades the whole west of Britain? England, for centuries the abode of industry, effort, and opulence, is subject to the same government, and situated in the same latitude, as Ireland, where indolence is almost universal, wealth rare, and manufactures in general unknown. Russia, ignorant, united, and ever victorious, adjoins Poland, weak, distracted, and ever vanquished; and Prussia has risen with unheard-of rapidity in national strength, and every branch of industry, at the very time when Spain was fast relapsing into slavery and barbarism.

Familiar as these truths are to all, they seem to have been, in an unaccountable manner, forgotten by our modern political economists; and the oblivion of them is the principal cause of the remarkable failure which has attended the application to practice of their theories regarding the commercial intercourse of countries with each other. They invariably forget the different age of nations; they overlook the essential difference between communities with different national character, or in different stages of manufacturing or commercial advancement; and fall into the fatal error of supposing that one general system is to be readily embraced by, and found applicable to, a cluster of

states existing under every possible variety of physical, social, and political circumstances. Fixing their eyes upon their own country, or rather upon the peculiar interest to which they belong in their own country, they reason as if all mankind were placed in the same circumstances, and would be benefited by the arrangements which they find advantageous. They forget that all nations were not planted at the same time, nor in the same soil; that the difference in their age, the inequality in their growth, the variety in their texture, is as great as in the trees of the forest, the seeds of which have been scattered by the hand of Nature; that the incessant warfare of the stronger with the weaker exists not less in the social than in the physical world; and that all systems founded on the oblivion of that continued contest, must ever be traversed by the strongest of all moral laws—the instinct of SELF-PRESERVATION.

We have said that the modern theories, when applied to practice, have in a remarkable manner failed. In saying so, we have chiefly in view the acknowledged failure of the strenuous efforts made by England, during the last twenty years, to effect an interchange in the advantages of free trade, and the entire disappointment which has attended the long establishment, on a great scale, of the reciprocity system. Ample room for reflection of the most serious kind is afforded by the facts on these subjects.

The abstract principles on which the doctrines of free trade are founded, are these; and we put it to the warmest advocates of those principles, whether they are not fairly stated. All nations were not intended by Nature, nor are they fitted by their physical circumstances, to excel in the same branches of industry; and it is the variety in the productions which they severally can bring to maturity which at once imposes the necessity for, and occasions the profit of, commercial intercourse. Nothing, therefore, can be so unwise as to attempt, either by arbitrary regulations, to create a branch of industry in a country for which it has not been intended by Nature, or to retain it in that branch where it is created by forced prohibitions. Banish all restrictions, therefore, from commerce; let every nation apply itself to that particular branch of industry for which it is adapted by Nature, and receive in exchange the produce of other countries, raised, in like manner, in conformity with their natural capabilities. Then will the industry of each people be turned into the channel most advantageous and lucrative to itself; each will enjoy the immense advantage of purchasing the commodities it requires at the cheapest possible rate; hopeless or absurd hot-bed attempts to force extraneous industry will cease; and, in the mutual interchange of the surplus produce of each, the foundation will be laid of an advantageous and durable commercial intercourse.

England, on this principle, should not attempt to raise wine, nor France iron or cotton goods; but the calicoes and hardware of Great Britain should be exchanged for the wines and fruits of France. Both nations will thus be enriched, and a vast commercial traffic grow up, which, being founded on mutual interest, and attended with mutual advantage, may be expected to be durable, and to extinguish in the end the rivalry of their respective people, or the jealousy of their several governments.

Such is the theory of free trade; and it may be admitted it wears at first sight a seducing and agreeable aspect. Let us now enquire how far experience, the great test of truth, has verified its doctrines, or demonstrated its practicability. To illustrate this matter, we shall have recourse to no mean or doubtful authority; we shall quote the statement of an enlightened but candid contemporary, whose advocating of a moderate system of free trade has excited no small anxiety in the British empire; and which, report, from the information and ability it displays, for long assigned to the present accomplished head of the Board of Trade.\*

The efforts made in Great Britain to introduce a general system of free trade, especially within the last three years, are thus enumerated in the *Foreign and Colonial Review* :—

“ England, without gaining or asking a single boon from any foreign country, has—

“ 1. Reduced by about one-half the duties upon foreign corn.

“ 2. By nearly the same amount, the duties on foreign timber.

“ 3. Has removed her prohibitions against the importation of cattle and other animals for food, and has fixed upon them duties, ranging on the average at about ten per cent *ad valorem*.

“ 4. Has made flesh meat admissible.

“ 5. Has reduced the duty on salt provisions for home consumption by one-third, and one-half; and has placed them on a footing of entire equality with the British article for the supply of the whole marine frequenting her ports.

“ 6. Has lowered her duties on vegetables and seeds in general to one-half, one-sixth, and even one-twelfth (in the case of that most important esculent, the potato) of what they formerly were.

“ 7. Has made all *great* articles of manufacture, except silk, which is reserved for future negotiations, admissible at duties of ten, twelve and a half, and fifteen per cent, and only in some few instances so much as twenty per cent.

“ 8. Upon some minor articles of manufacture, where our people lie under heavy disadvantages in obtaining the raw material, and where their habits have been formed in their particular occupation, wholly under the shelter, and therefore upon the responsibility of the law, she has retained duties in some cases as high as thirty per cent *ad valorem*, but yet has reduced them to rates insignificant in comparison with those formerly charged.

---

\* Mr Gladstone has since stated in Parliament that he did not write this article, and never read it. We are glad to hear it is so; but the information it contains is not the less authentic and valuable.

"9. In her colonies, she has fixed the ordinary rules of differential duties upon foreign productions at four and seven per cent, with exceptions altogether trifling in amount, on which a higher charge has been laid for special reasons.

"10. She has withdrawn the prohibition to export machinery, except so far as regards the linen manufacture, and the spinning of the yarns employed in it.

"11. With regard to many other articles, such as butter and cheese—indeed with regard to all articles to which the simple and essential interests of the revenue will allow the same rules to be applied—it has been declared that they are only temporarily exempted from the operations of those rules; and it is well understood that no time will be allowed to pass, except such as is necessary, before the work is completed; and lastly,

"12. She has not even excluded from the benefit of these reductions the very countries under whose simultaneous enactments, of a hostile character, she is at this moment suffering: these advantages will be enjoyed by the tar and cordage of Russia; by the corn and timber, the woollens, linens, and hosiery of northern Germany; by the gloves, the boots and shoes, the light writing-papers, the perfumery, the corks, the straw-hats, the cottons and cambrics, the dressed skins, the thrown silk, and even (from an incidental charge with respect to the charge of duty on the bottles) the wines of France; by the salt provisions, the ashes, the turpentine, the rice, the furs and skins, the sperm oil of America; and she in particular may expect to derive advantage from the alteration in our colonial import duties upon the great articles of flour, salt, provisions, fish, and lumber." \*

Such have been the sacrifices which Great Britain has recently made in order to secure a system of free commercial enterprise throughout the world. Let us now enquire what return she has met with for these concessions; and the recent occurrences in this respect are detailed in the same unexceptionable authority.

"Within the last year, France has passed an ordinance doubling the duty on linen yarns—a measure hostile enough, had it been uniform in its application to all countries; but, lest there should be any ambiguity about its meaning, she has actually left open her Belgian frontier to that article at the former duty, on the condition that Belgium should levy the high French duty in her custom-houses, so as to prevent the transit of the British yarns through that country. To this disreputable and humiliating proposal, Belgium has consented. Again, amid the loudest professions from the Prussian government, of an anxiety to advance the relaxation of commercial restrictions, that government has, nevertheless, adopted a proceeding not less hostile or mischievous than the measure of France with regard to linen yarns. The Congress of the Deputies of the Zollverein, at Stuttgard, have in a new tariff, which was to take effect on the 1st of January, besides some minor alterations of an unfavourable kind, decreed, upon the proposal of Prussia, that goods mixed of cotton and wool, if of more than one colour, shall pay fifty thalers the centner, instead of thirty; that is, instead of a very high, shall be liable to an exorbitant, and, as it may prove, a prohibitory duty. Next, America, as all our readers must be aware, has, after a struggle, passed a tariff, subverting altogether the arrangement established by the Compromise Act of 1833, and imposing upon the various descriptions of manufactured goods rates of duty varying from thirty to forty and fifty per cent and upwards, which have had the effect of stopping a great portion of the shipments of cotton

---

\* *Foreign and Colonial Review*, Vol. i. p. 235.

goods to that country from Great Britain during the past autumn, and, without doubt, have added greatly to the distresses of our manufacturing population. Besides these greater instances, Russia, according to her wont in such matters, and Spain, have published, within the last fifteen months, new tariffs, of which it is difficult to say whether they are still worse than, or only as execrably bad, as those which they succeeded; but, in the close rivalry between the old and the new, the latter seem, upon the whole, entitled to the palm of prohibitive rigour. And Portugal, likewise, has augmented the duties payable upon certain classes of her imports, by a measure of the recent date of March 1841, and by another of last year. In the mean time, Spain has concluded a treaty with Belgium for the admission of her linens. And the king of Prussia has effected an arrangement with the czar, which, in certain particulars, secures, upon his own frontier, a relaxation of the iron strictness of the Russian system. England has concluded no commercial treaty with any of these powers; and the negotiation with France, which the measures of Lord Palmerston interrupted in 1840, at the very period of its ripeness, appears still to slumber—owing, we believe, in part to the prevalence of an Anti-anglican feeling in that country, which, for the credit of common sense and of human nature, we trust will be temporary; but much more to the high protective notions, and the political activity and influence of the French manufacturers, which overawe an administration far less strong, we regret to say, than it deserves." \*

Our recent attempts, therefore, to introduce a general system of free trade among nations have proved a signal failure, on the admission of the most enlightened advocates for that species of policy. Nor have our earlier efforts been more successful. Mr Huskisson, as it is well known, introduced, full twenty years ago, the system of free trade, and repealed the Navigation Laws, in the hope of making the Northern Powers of Europe more favourable to the admission of British manufactures, and materially reduced the duties on French silks, watches, wines, and jewellery, in the hope that the government of that country would see the expedience of making a corresponding reduction in the duties levied on our staple manufactures in the French harbours. But after twenty years' experience of these concessions on our part, the French government are so far from evincing a disposition to meet us with a similar conciliatory policy, that they have done just the reverse. Scarce a year has elapsed without some additional duty being imposed on our fabrics in their harbours; and the great reductions contained in Sir Robert Peel's tariff were immediately met, as already noticed, by the imposition of an additional and very heavy duty on British linens. Nay, so far has the free trade system been from enlarging the market for our manufactures in Europe, that after twenty years' experience of its effects, and an increase over Europe generally of fully a third in numbers, and at least a half in wealth, it is an ascertained fact, that our exports to the European states *are less than they were*

---

\* *Foreign and Colonial Review*, Vol. i. p. 233.

forty years ago, before the free trade system was ever heard of. "That part of our commerce," says Mr Porter, himself a decided free trader, "which, being carried on with the rich and civilized inhabitants of European nations, should present the greatest field for extension, will be seen to have fallen off in a remarkable degree. The annual average exports of the whole of Europe were *less in value by nearly twenty per cent*, on an average of five years, from 1832 to 1836, *than they were during the five years that followed the close of the war*; and it affords strong evidence of the unsatisfactory footing on which our trading regulations with Europe are established, that our exports to the United States of America, which, with their population of 12,000,000, (in 1837,) are situated 3000 miles from us across the Atlantic, have amounted to more than half the sum of our shipments to the whole of Europe, with a population fifteen times as great as that of the United States of America, and with an abundance of productions suited to our wants, which they are naturally desirous of exchanging for the produce of our mines and looms." \*

This was written by Mr Porter in 1837; but while subsequent times have evinced an increased anxiety on the part of this country to extend the principles of free trade, they have been met by such increased determination on the part of the European governments to *resist the system*, and adhere more rigorously to their protecting policy, that the disproportion is now universal, and is every day becoming more remarkable. The following table will show that our exports to Europe, notwithstanding our twelve reciprocity treaties with its maritime powers, and unceasing efforts to give a practical exemplification of the principles of free trade, are stationary or declining.†

\* Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, Vol. i. p. 101.

† Table showing the date and value of Exports of British and Irish Manufactures to Europe in the after-mentioned years.

|      | Northern Europe. | Southern Europe. | Total.      |
|------|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1814 | £14,113,773      | £12,753,816      | £26,867,589 |
| 1815 | 11,791,692       | 8,764,552        | 20,556,544  |
| 1816 | 11,369,086       | 7,284,467        | 18,653,555  |
| 1817 | 11,408,083       | 9,685,491        | 19,093,574  |
| 1818 | 11,809,243       | 7,639,139        | 19,448,382  |
| 1819 | 9,805,397        | 6,896,287        | 16,601,684  |
| 1820 | 11,289,891       | 7,139,042        | 18,428,433  |
| 1833 | 9,313,549        | 5,686,949        | 15,000,498  |
| 1834 | 9,505,892        | 8,501,141        | 18,007,033  |
| 1835 | 10,303,316       | 8,161,117        | 18,464,433  |
| 1836 | 9,999,861        | 9,011,205        | 19,000,066  |
| 1837 | 11,097,436       | 7,789,126        | 18,187,662  |
| 1838 | 11,258,473       | 9,481,372        | 20,739,845  |
| 1839 | 11,991,236       | 9,376,241        | 21,367,477  |

In one particular instance, the entire failure of the free trade system to procure any corresponding return from the very continental states whose harbours it was chiefly intended to open, has been singularly conspicuous. In February 1821 the reciprocity system, in regard to shipping, was introduced by Mr Huskisson, and acted upon by the legislature; and the following reason was assigned by that eminent man for deviating from the old navigation laws of Cromwell, which had so long constituted the strength of the British navy. Mr Huskisson maintained—"That the period had now arrived, when it had become indispensable to introduce a more liberal system in regard to the admission of foreign shipping into our harbours, if we would avoid the total exclusion of our manufactures into their harbours. The exclusive system did admirably well as long as we alone acted upon it; when foreign nations were content to take our goods, though we excluded their shipping. But they had now become sensible of the impolicy of such a system, and, right or wrong, were resolved to resist it. Prussia, in particular, had resisted all the anxious endeavours of this country, to effect the introduction of goods of our manufacture, on favourable terms, into her harbours; and the reason assigned was, that the Navigation Laws excluded her shipping from ours. The reciprocity system has been rendered indispensable, by the prohibitory system which other European powers have adopted. The only means of meeting the heavy duties they have imposed on our goods and shipping, is to place our duties upon a system of perfect reciprocity with theirs. Foreign nations have no advantages over us in the carrying trade; from the London report, it clearly appeared that the ships of Norway, Sweden, Russia, Prussia, France, and Holland, cannot compete with British, either in long or short voyages. But, at any rate, the repeal of our discriminating duties has become a matter of necessity, if we would propose any trade with these countries."\*

Such were Mr Huskisson's reasons. They were grounded on alleged necessity. He said in substance—"The Navigation Laws are very good things; and if we could only persuade other nations to take our goods, while we virtually shut out their shipping, it would, doubtless, be very advisable to continue the present system. But you can no longer do this. Foreign nations see the undue advantage which has been so long obtained of them. They insist upon an exchange of interests. We, as the

---

\* Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, February 13, 1823; and *Annual Register*, 1823, p. 104.

Table showing the British and Foreign tonnage, with Sweden, Norway, Den-

richer and the more powerful, are called on to make the first advances. We must relinquish our Navigation Laws in favour of their staple manufacture, shipping, if we would induce them to admit on favourable terms our staple article, cotton goods." These were Mr Huskisson's principles; and it may be admitted that, in the abstract, they were well founded; for all commercial intercourse, to be beneficial and lasting, must be founded on a mutual exchange of advantages. But, in carrying into execution this principle, he committed a fatal mistake, which has already endangered, without the slightest advantage, and, if persevered in, may ultimately destroy, the commercial superiority of Great Britain. He virtually repealed, by the 4 Geo. IV. c. 77, and the 5 Geo. IV. c. 1, the Navigation Laws, by authorizing the king, by an order in council, to permit the exportation and importation of goods in foreign vessels, on payment of the same duties as were chargeable on British vessels, in favour of those countries which did not levy discriminating duties on British vessels bringing goods into their harbours, and to levy on the vessels of such countries the same tonnage duties as they charged on British vessels. This was, in

mark, and Prussia, since 1823, when the reciprocity system began, in each of the following years :—

| Years. | SWEDEN.       |               | NORWAY.       |               | DENMARK.      |               | PRUSSIA.      |               |
|--------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|        | British Tons. | Foreign Tons. | British Tons. | Foreign Tons. | British Tons. | Foreign Tons. | British Tons. | Foreign Tons. |
| 1821   | 23,005        | 8,508         | 13,855        | 61,342        | 5,312         | 3,969         | 79,590        | 37,720        |
| 1822   | 20,799        | 13,692        | 13,377        | 87,974        | 7,096         | 3,910         | 102,847       | 58,270        |
| 1823   | 20,986        | 22,529        | 13,122        | 117,015       | 4,413         | 4,795         | 81,202        | 86,013        |
| 1824   | 17,074        | 40,092        | 11,419        | 135,272       | 6,738         | 23,689        | 94,664        | 151,621       |
| 1825   | 15,906        | 53,141        | 14,825        | 157,910       | 15,158        | 50,943        | 189,214       | 182,752       |
| 1826   | 11,829        | 16,939        | 15,603        | 90,726        | 22,000        | 56,544        | 119,060       | 120,589       |
| 1827   | 11,719        | 21,822        | 13,945        | 96,420        | 10,825        | 52,456        | 150,718       | 109,184       |
| 1828   | 14,877        | 24,700        | 10,826        | 85,771        | 17,464        | 49,293        | 133,753       | 99,195        |
| 1829   | 16,536        | 25,046        | 9,985         | 86,205        | 24,576        | 53,390        | 125,918       | 127,861       |
| 1830   | 12,116        | 23,158        | 6,459         | 84,585        | 12,210        | 51,420        | 102,758       | 139,646       |
| 1831   | 11,450        | 38,689        | 4,518         | 114,865       | 6,552         | 62,190        | 83,908        | 140,532       |
| 1832   | 8,335         | 25,755        | 3,798         | 82,155        | 7,268         | 35,772        | 62,079        | 89,187        |
| 1833   | 10,009        | 29,454        | 5,901         | 98,931        | 6,840         | 38,620        | 41,735        | 108,753       |
| 1834   | 15,353        | 35,910        | 6,403         | 98,303        | 5,691         | 53,282        | 32,021        | 118,111       |
| 1835   | 12,036        | 35,061        | 2,592         | 95,049        | 6,007         | 49,008        | 25,514        | 124,144       |
| 1836   | 10,865        | 42,439        | 1,573         | 125,875       | 2,152         | 51,907        | 42,567        | 174,439       |
| 1837   | 7,608         | 42,602        | 1,035         | 88,004        | 5,357         | 55,961        | 67,566        | 145,742       |
| 1838   | 10,425        | 38,991        | 1,364         | 110,817       | 3,466         | 57,554        | 86,734        | 175,643       |
| 1839   | 8,359         | 49,270        | 2,582         | 109,228       | 5,535         | 106,960       | 111,470       | 229,208       |
| 1840   | 11,933        | 53,337        | 3,166         | 114,241       | 6,327         | 103,067       | 112,709       | 237,984       |

effect, to say—We will admit your vessels on the same terms on which you admit ours: and nothing, at first sight, could seem more equitable.

But, nevertheless, this system involved a fatal mistake, the pernicious effects of which have now been amply demonstrated by experience, and which lies at the bottom of the whole modern doctrines of free trade. *It stipulated for no advantage corresponding to the concession made*, and thus the reciprocity was on one side only. Mr Huskisson repealed, in favour of the Baltic powers, the British navigation laws; that is, he threw open to Baltic competition, without any protection, the British shipping interest: but *he forgot to exact from them any corresponding favour for British iron or cotton goods in the Baltic harbours*. He said—“We will admit your shipping on the same terms on which you admit ours.” What he should have said is—“We will admit your shipping into our harbours on the same terms you admit *our cotton and iron goods* into your harbours.” This would have been real reciprocity, because each side would have given free ingress to that staple commodity in which its neighbour had the advantage; and thus the most important branch of industry of each would have been secured an inlet into the other’s territories. The British tonnage might have been driven out of the Baltic trade by the shipowners of Denmark and Norway; but the Prussian cotton manufactories would have been crushed by the British. It might then have come to be a question of whether the upholding of our shipping interest or the extension of our cotton and iron manufactures was the most advisable policy. But no such question need be considered now. We have gained nothing by exposing our shipping interest to the ruinous competition of the Baltic vessels. The Danish, Norwegian, and Prussian ships have come into our harbours; but the British cotton and iron goods have not entered theirs.\* The reciprocity system has been all on one side. After having been twenty years in operation, it has failed in producing *the smallest concession* in favour of British manufactures, or producing in those states with whom the reciprocity

---

\* The following Table shows the miserably small amount of our present exports to the countries in whose favour we have repealed the navigation laws, viz. :—

|      | SWEDEN.  | NORWAY. | DENMARK. | PRUSSIA. |
|------|----------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1835 | £105,106 | £79,278 | £107,279 | £188,273 |
| 1836 | 113,306  | 79,469  | 100,762  | 160,273  |
| 1837 | 101,121  | 72,412  | 103,448  | 131,536  |
| 1838 | 102,697  | 77,485  | 181,404  | 155,225  |
| 1839 | 121,850  | 81,584  | 143,732  | 206,866  |
| 1840 | 119,425  | 78,916  | 201,462  | 219,435  |

—PORTER’S *Parliamentary Tables and Progress of the Nation*, Vol. ii 104.

treaties were concluded, the *smallest extension of British exports*. Since we so kindly permitted it, they have taken every thing and given nothing. They have done worse. They have taken good and returned evil. The vast concession contained in the repeal of our navigation laws, has been answered by the enhanced duties contained in the Prussian Zollverein and the American tariff; which has laid sixty per cent on our iron, and thirty-five per cent on our cotton goods. Twenty-six millions of Germans have been arrayed under a commercial league, which, by levying duties, practically varying from thirty to fifty, though nominally only ten per cent, effectually excludes British manufactures; and, after twenty years' experience, our exports are only a few hundred thousands a-year, and our exports of cotton manufactures *only a few hundreds a-year*, to the whole states of Northern Europe, in favour of whom the navigation laws were swept away, and an irreparable wound inflicted on British maritime interests; and in whose wants Mr Huskisson anticipated a vast market for our manufacturing industry, and an ample compensation for the diminution of our shipping interest. And our American exports have been so grievously injured by their tariff, that while, in 1836, they were above £12,000,000, they had fallen in 1842 to little more than *a fourth part* of that amount.

It is remarkable that, while we hear so much of the advantages of free trade, the reciprocity of them is always *in prospect* only. By throwing open our harbours to foreign nations, indeed, we give *them* an immediate and obvious advantage over ourselves; but as to any corresponding advantages we are to gain in our intercourse with them, we are still waiting in patient expectation of the anticipated benefit. Our patience is truly exemplary; it might furnish a model to Job himself. We resent nothing. No sooner do we receive a blow on one cheek, than we turn up the other to some new smiter. No sooner are we excluded, in return for our concessions, from the harbours of one state, than we begin making concessions to another. We are constantly in expectation of seeing the stream of human envy and jealousy run out:—

“Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis: at ille  
Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.”\*

We are imitating the man who made the experiment of constantly reducing the food on which his horse is to live. Let us take care that, just as he is learning to live on nothing, we do not find him dead in his stall.

The free traders fully admit, and deeply deplore, these unfavourable results; but they say that it is to be hoped they will not continue; that foreign nations must, in the end, come to

---

\* The countryman waits till the river should run out; but it flows, and, as it flows for ever, will flow on.

see that they are as much interested as we are in an enlightened system of free trade; and that, meantime, it is for our interest to continue the system; or even though it totally fails in producing any augmentation in our exports, it is obviously for our advantage to continue it, as it brings in the immediate benefit of purchasing articles imported at a cheaper rate. Supposing, say they, we obtain no corresponding advantage from other states, there is an immense benefit accrues to ourselves from admitting foreign goods at a nominal duty, from the low price at which they may be purchased by the British consumer. To that point we shall advert in the sequel; in the mean time, it may be considered as demonstrated, that the free trade system has entirely failed in procuring for us the slightest extension of our foreign exports, or abating in the slightest degree the jealousy of foreign nations at our maritime and manufacturing superiority. Nor is there any difficulty in discovering to what this failure has been owing. It arises from causes inherent in the nature of things, and which will remain unabated as long as we continue a great and prosperous nation.

It is related of the Lacedemonians, that while all the other citizens of Greece were careful to surround their towns with walls, they alone left their city open on all sides. Their superiority in the field rendered them indifferent to the adventitious protection of ramparts. It is for a similar reason that England is now willing to throw down the barriers of tariffs, and the impediments of custom-houses; and that all other nations are fain to raise them up. It is a secret sense of superiority on the one side, and of inferiority on the other, which is the cause of the difference. We advocate freedom of trade, because we are conscious that, in a fair unrestricted competition, we should succeed in beating them out of their own market. They resist it, and loudly clamour for protection, because they are aware that such a result would speedily take place, and that the superiority of the old commercial state is such, that on an open trial of strength, it must at once prove fatal to its younger rivals. As this effect is thus the result of permanent causes affecting both sides, it may fairly be presumed that it will be lasting; and that the more anxiously the old manufacturing state advocates or acts upon freedom of commercial intercourse, the more strenuously will the younger and rising ones advocate protection. Reciprocity, therefore, is out of the question between them; for it never could exist without the destruction of the manufactures of the younger state; and if that state has begun to enter on the path of manufacturing industry, it never will be permitted by its government.

But this is not all. If free trade must of necessity prove fatal to the manufactures of the younger state, it as certainly leads to the destruction *of the agriculture of the older*; and it is this

double effect, this RECIPROCITY OF EVIL, which renders it so disastrous and impracticable an experiment for both the older and the younger community. The reason of this has not hitherto been generally attended to; but when once it is stated, its force becomes obvious, and it furnishes the true answer on principle to the delusive doctrines of free trade.

Nature has established, and, as it will immediately be shown, for very wise and important purposes, a permanent and indelible distinction between the effect of civilization and opulence on the production of food, and on the preparation of manufactures. In the latter, the discoveries of science, the exertions of skill, the application of capital, the introduction of machinery, are all-powerful, and give the older and more advanced state an immediate and decisive advantage over the younger and the ruder. In the former, the very reverse takes place: the additions made to productive power are comparatively inconsiderable, even by the most important discoveries; and although capital and industry have in the end a powerful effect, and always enable the power of raising food for the human race to keep far ahead of the wants of mankind; yet this effect takes place very slowly, and the annual addition that can be made to the produce of the earth by such means is by no means considerable. The introduction of thorough draining will probably increase the productive power of the soil in Great Britain a third: scientific discovery may perhaps add another third; but at least ten years must elapse in the most favourable view before these effects generally take place—ere the judicious and well-directed labours of our husbandmen have formed rivulets for the superfluous wet of our fields, or overspread the soil with the now wasted animal remains of our cities. But our manufactures can in a few years quadruple their produce. So vast is the power which the steam-engine has made to the powers of production in commercial industry, that it is susceptible of almost indefinite and immediate extension; and the great difficulty always felt is, not to get hands to keep pace with the demand of the consumers, but to get a demand to keep pace with the hands employed in the production. Manchester and Glasgow could, in a few years, furnish muslin and cotton goods for the whole world.

Nor is the difference less important and conspicuous in the *price* at which manufacturing and agricultural produce can be raised in the old and the young state. This is the decisive circumstance which renders reciprocity between them impossible. The rich old state is as superior to the young one in the production of manufactures, as the poor young state is to the rich old one in that of subsistence. The steam-engine, capital, and machinery, have so enormously increased the power of manufac-

turing production, that they have rendered the old commercial state omnipotent in the foreign market in the supply of its articles. Nothing but fiscal regulations and heavy duties can protect the young state from ruin in those branches of industry. Heavy taxes, high wages, costly rents, dear rude produce, all are at once compensated, and more than compensated, by the gigantic powers of the steam-engine. Cotton goods are raised now in Great Britain at a fifth of the price which they were during the war. A gown which formerly was cheap at L.2 is now sold for eight shillings. Silks, muslins, and all other articles of female apparel, have been reduced in prices in the same proportion. Colossal fortunes have been made by the master manufacturers, unbounded wealth diffused through the operative workmen in Lancashire and Lanarkshire, even at these extremely reduced prices. This is the real reason of the universal effort made by all nations which have the least pretensions to commercial industry, of late years to exclude, by fixed duties, our staple manufactures; of which the President of the Board of Trade so feelingly complains, and which the advocates of free trade consider as so inexplicable. A very clear principle has led to it, and will lead to it. It is the instinct of SELF-PRESERVATION.

But there is no steam-engine in agriculture. The old state has no superiority over the young one in the price of producing food; on the contrary, it is decidedly its inferior. There, as in love, the apprentice is the master. The proof of this is decisive. Poland can raise wheat with ease at fifteen or twenty shillings a quarter, while England requires fifty. The serf of the Ukraine would make a fortune on the price at which the farmer of Kent or East-Lothian would be rendered bankrupt. The Polish cultivators have no objection whatever to a free competition with the British; but the British anticipate, and with reason, total destruction from the free admission of Polish grain. These facts are so notorious, that they require no illustration; but nevertheless the conclusion to which they point is of the highest importance, and bears with overwhelming force on the theory of free trade as between an old and a young community. They demonstrate, that that theory is not only practically pernicious, but on principle erroneous. It involves an oblivion of the fundamental law of nature as to the difference between the effect of wealth and civilization on the production of food and the raising of manufactures. It proceeds on insensibility to the difference in the age and advancement of nations, and the impossibility of a reciprocity being established between them without the ruin of an important branch of industry in each. It supposes nations to be of the same genus and age, like the trees in the larch plantation, not of all varieties and ages, as in the natural forest. If

established in complete operation, it would only lead to the ruin of the manufactures of the younger state, and of the agriculture of the older one. The only reciprocity which it can ever introduce between such states is the reciprocity of evil.

Illustrations from everyday life occur on all sides to elucidate the utter absurdity, and in fact, total impracticability of the system of free trade, as applied to nations who are, or are becoming, rivals of each other in manufacturing industry. Those who have the advantage, will always advocate free competition; those who are labouring under impediments, will always exclaim against them. In some cases the young have the advantage, in others the old; but in all the free system is applauded by those in the sunshine, and execrated by those in the shade. The fair *debutante* of eighteen, basking in the bright light of youth, beauty, birth, and connexions, has no sort of objection to the freedom of choice in the ball-room. If the mature spinster of forty would divulge her real opinion, what would it be on the same scene of competition? Experience proves that she is glad to retire, in the general case, from the unequal struggle, and finds the system of established precedence and fixed rank at dinner parties, much more rational. The leaders on the North Circuit, Sir James Scarlett or Lord Brougham, had no objections to the free choice, by solicitors and attorneys, of professional talent; but their younger brethren of the gown are fain to take shelter from such formidable rivals in the exclusive employment of the Crown, the East India Company, the Bank of England, or some of the numerous chartered companies in the country. England is the old lawyer on the Circuit in manufactures—but Poland is the young beauty of the ball-room in agriculture. We should like to see what sort of reciprocity could be established between them. Possibly the young belle may exchange her beauty for the old lawyer's guineas, but it will prove a bad reciprocity for both.

It is usual for both philosophers and practical men to ascribe the superior cheapness with which subsistence can be raised in the young state to the old one, to the weight of taxes and of debt, public and private, with which the latter is burdened, from which the former is, in general, relieved. But, without disputing that these circumstances enter with considerable power into the general result, it may safely be affirmed, that the main cause of it is to be found in two laws of nature, of universal and permanent application. These are the low value of money in the rich state, in consequence of its plenty, compared with its high value in the poor one, in consequence of its poverty, and the experienced inapplicability of machinery or the division of labour to agricultural operations.

Labour is cheap in the poor state, such as Poland, Prussia, and the Ukraine, because guineas are wanting.—“It is not,” as Johnson said of the Highlands, “that eggs are many, but that pence are few.” Commercial transactions being scanty, and the want of a circulating medium inconsiderable, it exists in a very limited extent in the country. People do not need a large circulating medium, therefore they do not buy it; they are poor, therefore they cannot. In the opulent and highly advanced community, on the other hand, the reverse of all this takes place. Transactions are so frequent, the necessities of commerce so extensive, that a large circulating medium is soon felt to be indispensable. In addition to a considerable amount of specie, the aid of bank-notes, public and private, of government securities and exchequer bills, and of private bills to an immense amount, becomes necessary. M'Culloch calculates the circulating medium of Great Britain, including paper and gold, at L.72,000,000. The bills in circulation are probably in amount nearly as much more. A hundred and forty, or a hundred and fifty millions, between specie, bank-notes, exchequer bills, government securities, on which advances are made, and private bills, constitute the ordinary circulating medium of twenty-seven millions in the British empire. The total circulation of Russia, with sixty millions of inhabitants, is not forty millions sterling. The effect of this difference is prodigious. It is no wonder, when it is taken into account that wages are 5½d. or 6d. a-day in Poland or the Ukraine, and 2s. or 2s. 6d. a-day in England.

The clearest proof that this is the great cause of the superior cost of raising subsistence in the old than the young state, is afforded by the different value which money bears in different parts of the *same* community. Ask any housekeeper what is the difference between the expense of living in London, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, and he will answer, that L.1500 a-year will not go further than L.1000 a-year in Edinburgh, or L.750 in Aberdeen. Yet these different places are all situated in the same community, and their inhabitants pay the same public taxes, and very nearly the same local ones. It is the vast results arising from the concentration of wealth and expenditure in one place, compared with its abstraction from others, which occasions the difference. But if this effect is conspicuous, and matter of daily observation, in different parts of the same compact and moderately sized country, how much more must it obtain in regard to different countries, situated in different latitudes and political circumstances, and in different stages of wealth, civilization, and commercial opulence? Between England, for example, and Poland or the Ukraine? The difference is more important and

durable. Wheat can be raised with as good a profit to the cultivator for sixteen shillings per quarter in Poland, as for fifty-six shillings in England or Scotland.

This superior weight of wages, rent, and all the elements of cost, in the old, when compared with the young community, affects the manufacturer as well as the farmer; and in some branches of manufactures it does so with an overwhelming effect. But, generally speaking, the advantages of capital, machinery, and the division of labour, render the old state altogether predominant over the young one in these particulars. It would seem to be a fixed law of nature, that the progress of society adds almost nothing to the application of machinery to agriculture, but indefinitely to its importance in manufactures. Observe an old man digging his garden with a spade, and manuring it with the refuse of his cottage and cow-house—that is the most productive species of cultivation; it is the last stage of agricultural progress to return to it. No steam engines or steam ploughs will ever rival it. But what is the old weaver toiling with his hands, to the huge steam-power mill, turning at once ten thousand spindles? As dust in the balance. Man, by a beneficent law of his Maker, is permanently secured in his first and best pursuit. It is in those which demoralize and degrade, that machinery progressively encroaches on the labour of his hands. England can undersell India in muslins and printed goods, manufactured in Lancashire or Lanarkshire out of cotton which grew on the banks of the Ganges; for England, though younger in years compared to India, is old in civilization, wealth, and power. We should like to see what profit would be made by exporting wheat from England, raised on land paying thirty shillings an acre of rent, by labourers paid at two shillings a-day, to Hindostan, where rice is raised twice a-year, on land paying five shillings an acre rent, by labourers receiving twopence a-day each.

It is the constant operation of this law of nature which ensures the equalization of empires, the happiness of society, and the dispersion of mankind. To be convinced of this, we have only to reflect on the results which would ensue if this were not the case; if no unvarying law gave man, in remote situations, an advantage in raising subsistence over what he enjoys in the centres of opulence; and agriculture, in the aged and wealthy community, was able to acquire the same decisive superiority over distant and comparatively poor ones which we see daily exemplified in the production of manufactures. Suppose, for example, that in consequence of the application of the steam-engine, capital, and machinery, to the raising of subsistence, Great Britain could undersell the cultivators of Poland and the Ukraine as effectually as she does their manufacturers in the production of cotton

goods; that she could sell in the Polish market wheat at five shillings a quarter, when they require fifteen shillings to remunerate the cost of production. Would not the result be, that commerce between them would be entirely destroyed; that subsistence would be exclusively raised in the old and opulent community; that mankind would congregate in fearful multitudes round the great commercial emporiums of the world; and that the industry and progress of the more distant nations would be irrevocably blighted? Whereas, by the operation of the present law of nature, that the rich state can always undersell the poor one in manufactures, and the poor one always undersell the rich one in subsistence, those dangers are removed, a check is provided to the undue multiplication of the species in particular situations, and the dispersion of mankind over the globe—a vital object in the system of nature—is secured from the very necessities and difficulties in which, in the progress of society, the old and wealthy community becomes involved.

If capital, machinery, and knowledge, conferred the same immediate and decisive advantage on agricultural that they do on manufacturing industry, old and densely peopled states would possess an undue superiority over the ruder and more thinly inhabited ones; the multiplication of the human race would become excessive in the seats in which it had first taken root, and the desert parts of the world would never, but under the pressure of absolute necessity, be explored. The first command of God to man, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it," would be frustrated. The apprehensions of the Malthusians as to an excessive increase of mankind, with its attendant dangers, would be realized in particular places, while nineteen-twentieths of the earth lay neglected in a state of nature. The desert would be left alone in its glory. The world would be covered with huge and densely peopled excrescences—with Babylons, Romes, and Londons—in which wealth, power, and corruption, were securely and permanently intrenched, and from which the human race would never diverge but under the pressure of absolute impossibility to wrench a subsistence from their overpeopled vicinities.

These dangers, threatening alike to the moral character and material welfare of nations, are completely prevented by the simple law, the operation of which we every day see around us—viz. that wealth, civilization, and knowledge, add rapidly and indefinitely to the powers of manufacturing and commercial, but comparatively slowly to those of agricultural industry. This simple circumstance effectually provides for the dispersion of the human race, and the check of an undue growth in particular communities. The old state can always undersell the young one in manufactures, but it is everlastingly undersold by them in

agriculture. Thus the equalization of industry is introduced, the dispersion of the human race secured, and a limit put to the perilous multiplication of its numbers in particular communities. The old state can never rival the young ones around it in raising subsistence; the young ones can never rival the old one in manufactured articles. Either a free trade takes place between them, or restrictions are established. If the commercial intercourse between them is unrestricted, agriculture is destroyed, and with it national strength is undermined in the old state, and manufactures are nipped in the bud in the young ones. If restrictions prevail, and a war of tariffs is introduced, the agriculture of the old state, and with it its national strength, is preserved, but its export of manufactures to the adjoining states is checked, and they establish growing fabrics for themselves. Whichever effect takes place, the object of nature in the equalization of industry, the limitation of aged communities, and the dispersion of mankind, is gained; in the first, by the ruin of the old empire from the decay of its agricultural resources; in the second, by the check given to its manufacturing progress, and the transference of mercantile industry to its younger rivals.

These considerations point out an important limitation to which, on principle, the doctrines of free trade must be subjected. Perfectly just in reference to a single community, or a compact empire of reasonable extent, they wholly fail when applied to separate nations in different degrees of civilization, or even to different provinces of the same empire, when it is of such an extent as to bring such different nations, in various degrees of progress, under one common dominion. They were suggested, in the first instance, to philosophers, by the absurd restrictions on the commerce of grain which existed in France under the old monarchy, and which Turgot and the Economists laboured so assiduously to abolish. There can be no doubt that they were perfectly right in doing so; for France is a compact, homogeneous country, in which the cost of producing subsistence is not materially different in one part from another, and the interests of the whole community are closely identified. The same holds with the interchange of grain between the different provinces of Spain, or of the various parts of the British islands. But the case is widely different with an empire so extensive as, like the British in modern or the Roman in ancient times, to embrace separate kingdoms, in wholly different circumstances of climate, progress, and social condition. Free trade, in such circumstances, must lead to a destruction of important interests, and a total subversion of the balance of society in both the kingdoms subjected to it. To be convinced of this, we have only to look at

the present condition of the British, or the past fate of the Roman empire.

It is the boast of our manufacturers—and such a marvel may well afford a subject for exultation—that with cotton which grew on the banks of the Ganges, they can, by the aid of British capital, machinery, and enterprise, undersell, in the production of muslin and cotton goods, the native Indian manufacturers, who work up their fabrics in the close vicinity of the original cotton-fields. The constant and increasing export of British goods to India, two-thirds of which are cotton, demonstrates that this superiority really exists; and that the muslin manufacturers in Hindostan, who work for a penny a-day on their own cotton, cannot stand the competition of the British operatives, who receive 3s. 6d. a-day, aided as they are by the almost miraculous powers of the steam-engine. Free trade, therefore, is ruinous to the manufacturing interests of India; and accordingly the Parliamentary proceedings are filled with evidence of the extreme misery which has been brought on the native manufacturers of Hindostan by that free importation of British goods in which our economists so much and so fully exult.\*

The great distance of India from the British islands, the vast expense of transporting bulky articles eight thousand miles across the ocean, have prevented the counterpart of this effect taking place, and the British farmers feeling the depressing influence of the Indian plough, in like manner as the Indian manufactures have the ruinous competition of the British steam-engine. But it is clear that, if India had been nearer, the former effect would have taken place as well as the latter. If the shores of Hindostan were within a few days' sail of London and Liverpool, and the Indian cultivators, labouring at 2d. or 3d. a-day, had been brought into direct competition with the British farmers, employing labourers who received two or three shillings, can there be a doubt that the British farmers would have been

---

\* Exports of British Cotton Goods to India.

|       |   |   |   |            |
|-------|---|---|---|------------|
| 1831, | . | . | . | £1,666,141 |
| 1832, | . | . | . | 1,122,168  |
| 1833, | . | . | . | 1,497,992  |
| 1834, | . | . | . | 1,274,804  |
| 1835, | . | . | . | 1,801,773  |
| 1836, | . | . | . | 2,582,221  |
| 1837, | . | . | . | 2,160,986  |
| 1838, | . | . | . | 2,443,654  |
| 1839, | . | . | . | 3,005,670  |
| 1840, | . | . | . | 3,873,186  |
| 1841, | . | . | . | 3,427,612  |

—Porter's *Parl. Tables*, Vol. i. to x.

totally destroyed in the struggle? The English farmers would have been prostrated by the same cause which has ruined the Indian muslin manufacturers. Cheap grain, the fruit of free trade, would have demolished British agriculture as completely as cheap cotton goods, the fruits of unlimited importation, has ruined Indian manufacturing industry, or as cheap fruit, the result of the recent reduction of its duties, has destroyed the orchards of the Clyde or of Worcestershire.

Is, then, commercial intercourse impossible, on terms of mutual benefit, between states in widely different circumstances of commercial or agricultural advancement; and is the only reciprocity which can exist between them the reciprocity of evil? It is by no means necessary to rest in so unsatisfactory a conclusion. A most advantageous commercial intercourse to both parties may be carried on, but it must not be on the footing of free trade. The foundation of such an intercourse should be, that each should take, on the most favourable terms, the articles which *it wants and does not produce*, and impose restrictions on those which *it wants and does produce*. On this principle, trade would be conducted so as to benefit both countries, and injure neither. Thus England may take from India to the utmost extent, and with perfect safety, sugar, indigo, cotton, tea, spices, cinnamon, and the more costly species of shawls; while India might take from England some species of cotton manufacture in which they have no fabrics of their own, cutlery, hardware, and all the various luxuries of European manufacture. But a paternal and just government, equally alive to the interests of all its provinces, how far removed soever from the seat of power, would impose restrictions to prevent India being deluged with British cottons, to the ruin of its native manufactures, and to prevent Britain—if the distance did not operate, which it certainly would, as a sufficient protection—from being flooded with Indian grain. The varieties of climate, productions, and wants, in different countries, are such, that commerce, regulated on these principles, might be carried to the greatest extent consistent with the paramount duty of providing in each state for the preservation of its staple articles of industry.

The Roman empire in ancient times afforded the clearest demonstration of the truth of these principles; and the fate of their vast dominion shows, in the most decisive manner, what is the inevitable consequence to which the free trade principles, now so strongly contended for by a party in this country, must lead. The decline of the Roman empire is in great part to be traced to this source. In the tenth volume of Alison's "History of Europe," p. 752, we find the following passage:—

"No nation can pretend to independence which rests for any sensible por-

tion of its subsistence in ordinary seasons on foreign, who may become hostile, nations. And if we would see a memorable example of the manner in which the greatest and most powerful nation may, in the course of ages, come to be paralysed by this cause, we have only to cast our eyes on imperial Rome, in which the vast extent of the empire had practically established a free trade in grain with the whole civilized world; and the result was, that cultivation disappeared from the Italian plains, that the race of Roman agriculturists, the strength of the empire, became extinct, that the fields were laboured only by slaves and cattle. The legions could no longer be recruited but from foreign bands, vast tracts of pasturage overspread even the fields of Lombardy and the Campagna of Naples, and it was the plaintive confession of the Roman annalist, that the mistress of the world had come to depend for her subsistence on the floods of the Nile."

This observation has excited, as well it might, the vehement indignation of the free trade journals. The example of the greatest and most powerful nation that ever existed, being weakened, and at length ruined by a free trade in corn, afforded too cogent an argument, and was too striking a warning, not to excite the wrath of those who would precipitate Great Britain into a similar course of policy. They have attacked the author, accordingly, with unwonted asperity; and, while they admit the ruin of Italian agriculture in the later stages of the Roman empire, endeavour to ascribe it to the gratuitous distribution of grain to the Roman populace, not the effect of a free importation of grain from its Egyptian and African provinces. But the authorities to which the historian refers in support of his position, amply bear him out; and from among them we select Tacitus, Gibbon, and Michelet. Tacitus says—

"At Hercule *olim ex Italia* legionibus longinquas in provincias commeatus portabantur, *nec nunc infecunditate laboratur*; sed *Africam potius et Egyptum exercemus*, navibusque et casibus vita populi Romani permissa est."—TACITUS, *Annal.* xii. 43.\*

Antiquity does not contain a more pregnant and important passage, or one more directly bearing on the present policy of the British empire, than this. It demonstrates: 1, That in former times Italy had been an exporting country; "*olim ex Italia commeatus in longinquas provincias portabantur.*" 2, That at the time when Tacitus wrote, in the days of the emperor Trajan, it had ceased to be so, and had come to import largely from Africa and Lybia, "*sed nunc Africam potius et Egyptum exercemus.*" 3, That this was not the result of any supervening sterility or unfruitfulness, "*nec nunc infecunditate laboratur,*" but was from causes which made it more profitable to purchase grain in the

---

\* "But, by Hercules, formerly provisions were brought from Italy into far distant provinces, for the use of the legions; nor do we now labour under any sterility of soil; but we now draw our supplies rather from Africa and Egypt, and the life of the Roman people is entrusted to the winds and the waves."

Egyptian or Lybian markets, "sed Africam POTIUS et Egyptum exerceamus."

Of the extent to which this decay of agriculture in the central provinces of the Roman empire went, in the latter stages of its history, we have the following striking account in the authentic pages of Gibbon:—

"Since the age of Tiberius *the decay of agriculture had been felt in Italy*; and it was a just subject of complaint that the life of the Roman people depended on the accidents of the winds and the waves. In the division and decline of the empire, *the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa* were withdrawn; the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished with the means of subsistence; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, pestilence, and famine. Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer, and he affirms, with strong exaggeration, that in Emilia, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated."—GIBBON, vol. vi. c. xxxvi. p. 235.

Of the progress and extent of this decay, Gibbon gives the following account in another part of his great work:—

"The agriculture of the Roman provinces *was insensibly ruined*; and in the progress of despotism, which tends to disappoint its own purpose, the emperors were obliged to derive some merit from the forgiveness of debts, or the remission of tributes, which their subjects were utterly incapable of paying. According to the new division of Italy, the fertile and happy province of Campania, the scene of the early victories and of the delicious retirements of the citizens of Rome, extended between the sea and the Apennines, from the Tiber to the Silarius. Within sixty years after the death of Constantine, and on the evidence of an actual survey, an exemption was granted in favour of 330,000 English acres *of desert and uncultivated land, which amounted to one-eighth of the whole surface of the province*. As the footsteps of the barbarians had not yet been seen in Italy, the cause of this amazing desolation, which is recorded in the laws, (Cod. Theod. lxi. t. 38, l. 2,) can be ascribed only to the administration of the Roman emperors."—GIBBON, vol. iii. c. xviii. p. 87. Edition in twelve volumes.

Michelet observes, in his late profound and able History of France:—

"The Christian emperors could not remedy the growing depopulation of the country any more than their heathen predecessors. All their efforts only showed the impotence of government to arrest that dreadful evil. Sometimes, alarmed at the depopulation, they tried to mitigate the lot of the farmer, to shield him against the landlord; upon this the proprietor exclaimed he could no longer pay the taxes. At other times they abandoned the farmer, surrendered him to the landlord, and strove to chain him to the soil; but the unhappy cultivators perished or fled, *and the land became deserted*. Even in the time of Augustus, efforts were made to arrest the depopulation at the expense of morals, by encouraging concubinage. Pertinax granted an immunity from taxes to those who could *occupy the desert lands of Italy, to the cultivators of the distant provinces, and the allied kings*. Aurelian did the same. Probus was obliged to transport from Germany men and oxen to cultivate Gaul.\* Maximian and Constantius transported the Franks and Ger-

---

\* "Arantur Gallicana rurā barbaris bobus, et juga Germanica captiva præbent colla nostris cultoribus."—*Probi Epist. ad Senatū, in Vopesio*.

mans from Picardy and Hainault into Italy; but the depopulation in the towns and the country alike continued. The people surrendered themselves in the fields to despair, as a beast of burden lies down beneath his load and refuses to rise. In vain the emperor strove, by offers of immunities and exemptions, to recall the cultivator to his deserted fields. Nothing could do so. *The desert extended daily.* At the commencement of the fifth century there was, *in the Happy Campania, the most fertile province of the empire, 520,000 jugera (320,000 acres) in a state of nature.\**—MICHELET, *Histoire de France*, i. 104-108.

Pursued to its very grave by the same deep-rooted cause of evil, the strength of Italy, even in the last stages of its decay, was still prostrated by the importation of grain from Egypt and Lybia. "The Campagna of Rome," says Gibbon, "about the close of the sixth century, was reduced to the state of *a dreary wilderness*, in which the land was barren, the waters impurè, and the air infectious. Yet the number of citizens *still exceeded the measure of subsistence; their precarious food was supplied from the harvests of Egypt and Lybia*; and the frequent repetitions of famine betray the inattention of the emperors to a distant province."—GIBBON, vol. viii. c. xlv. 162.

Nor was this desolating scourge of foreign importation confined to Italy; it obtained also in Greece equally with the Ausonian fields, the abode of early riches, opulence, and prosperity. "In the latter stages of the empire," says Michelet, "Greece was almost entirely *supported by corn raised in the fields of Podolia*," (Poland.)—MICHELET, i. 277.

Now, let it be recollected that this continual and astonishing decline of agriculture, and disappearance of the rural cultivators in the latter stages of the Roman empire, took place in an empire which contained, as Gibbon tells us, 120,000,000 of inhabitants, and 1600 great cities, was 3000 miles long and 2000 miles broad, contained 1,600,000 square miles, chiefly fertile and well cultivated land, which embraced the fairest and most fertile portions of the earth, and which had been governed for eighty years under the successive sway of Nerva, Adrian, Trajan, and the two Antonines, with consummate wisdom and the most paternal spirit, and in which there were no restrictions on the commerce of grain, as the whole civilized world was included in the same dominion.† The scourge of foreign war, the devastation of foreign armies, were alike unknown; profound tranquillity pervaded every part of the empire; and a vast inland lake, spreading its ample waters through the heart of the dominion, afforded to all its provinces the most perfect facility of intercourse with the

---

\* GIBBON, chap. i. 44.

† Quingena viginti octo millia quadringenta duo jugera, quæ Campania provincia, juxta inspectorum relationem, in desertis et squalidis locis habere dignoscitur, iisdem provincialibus concessum."—*Cod. Theod.* lxi. i. 23, 82.

metropolis and central parts of the empire. Yet this period—the period which Mr Hume has told us the philosophers would select as the happiest the human race had ever known—was precisely that during which agriculture so rapidly declined in the Italian and Grecian fields, during which the sturdy race of free cultivators disappeared, and the plains of Italy were entirely absorbed by pasturage, and maintained only vast herds of cattle tended by slaves.

What was it, then, which in an empire containing so immense a population, and such boundless resources, drawn forth and developed under so wise and beneficent a race of emperors, occasioned this constant and uninterrupted decay of agriculture, and at length the total destruction of the rural population in the heart of the empire? How did it happen that Italian cultivation receded, as Tacitus and Gibbon tell us it did, *from the time of Tiberius*; and equally under the wisdom of the Antonines as the tyranny of Nero, or the civil wars of Vitellius? Some general and durable cause must have been in operation during all this period, which at first depressed, and at length totally destroyed, the numerous body of free Italian cultivators who so long had constituted the strength of the legions, and had borne the Roman eagles, conquering and to conquer, to the very extremities of the habitable earth. The cause is apparent. It was the free importation of Egyptian and Lybian grain, consequent on the extension of the Roman dominion over their fertile fields, which effected the result. Were England to extend its conquering arms over Poland and the Ukraine, and, as a necessary consequence, expose the British farmer to the unrestrained competition of Polish and Russian wheat, precisely the same result would ensue. If the shores of Hindostan were within three or four days' sail of the mouth of the Thames, as those of Lybia were from the mouth of the Tiber, this result would long ago have taken place. Let Polish and Russian grain be admitted without a protecting duty into the British harbours, as Lybian and Egyptian were into those of Italy, and we shall soon see the race of cultivators disappear from the fields of England as they did from those of old Rome, and the words of Tacitus will, by a mere change of proper names, become a picture of our condition; three hundred thousand acres will soon be reduced to a state of nature in Kent and Norfolk, as they were in the Campania Felix. "Nor do we now labour under sterility of soil, but we draw our supplies in preference from Poland and Russia, and the life of the English people has been committed to ships and chance." \*

---

\* "Nec nunc infecunditate laboramur; *Podoliam* potius et *Scythiam* exercemus, navibusque et casibus vita populi *Anglici* permissa est."

The free traders allege that the decay of agriculture in the central provinces of the Roman empire, to which, by the concurring testimony of all historians, the ruin of the dominion of the Cæsars was chiefly owing, is to be ascribed, not to the free importation of grain from Egypt, Podolia, and Lybia, but to the tyranny of the emperors, the gratuitous distribution of grain to the Roman populace, and the dreadful evils of domestic slavery. A very slight consideration, however, must be sufficient to show that these causes, how powerful soever in producing *general* evils over the empire, could not have been instrumental in occasioning those *peculiar* and separate causes of depression which so early began to check, and at length totally destroyed, the agriculture of its central provinces.

The tyranny of the Cæsars, the oppression of the Proconsuls, the avarice of the Patricians, were general evils, affecting alike every part of the empire; or rather they were felt with more severity in the remote provinces than the districts nearer home, in consequence of the superior opportunities of escape which distance from the central government afforded to iniquity, and the lesser chance of success which the insurrection of a remote province held forth to the "wild revenge" of rebellion. Muscovite oppression, accordingly, is more severely felt at Odessa or Taganrog than St Petersburg; and British rule is far from being restrained by the same considerations of justice on the banks of the Ganges or the Indus, as on those of the Thames. The gratuitous distribution of grain by the emperors to the populace of Rome, could never have occasioned the ruin of the Italian *cultivators*. Supposing that the two or three hundred thousand lazy and turbulent plebeians, who were nourished by the bounty or fed by the terrors of the Cæsars, were the most useless, worthless, and dangerous set of men that ever existed, (which they probably were,) that circumstance could never have uprooted the race of cultivators from the plains of Lombardy, Umbria, or the Campania Felix. The greatest possible good to a nation, according to the free trader, is cheap grain, and never more so than when it is purchased or imported from foreign growers. If this be true, the importation of the harvests of Egypt and Africa into the Italian harbours, either by the voluntary purchase of the Roman emperors, or the forced tribute in grain which they exacted from those provinces, must have been the greatest possible benefit to the Italian people. How then, if there be no mischief in such foreign importations, is it possible to ascribe the ruin of Italian cultivation, and with it of the Roman empire, to these forced contributions? If the free traders have recourse to such an argument, they concede the very point in dispute, and admit that the introduction of foreign grain is injurious, and may in the end prove fatal, to the agriculture and existence of a state.

Slavery, though a great evil, will as little explain the peculiar and extraordinary decline of Italian and Grecian cultivation in the later stages of the Roman empire. The greater part of the labour of the ancient world, as every one knows, was conducted by means of slaves. They were slaves who held the plough, and tilled the land, and tended the flocks, equally in Lybia, in Campania, in Egypt, as in Umbria. Nay, the number of freemen, at least in the days of the Roman Republic, and the earlier periods of the empire, was incomparably *greater* in Italy and Greece, the abode of celebrated, powerful, and immortal republics, than in Lybia and Egypt, which from the earliest times had been subject to the despotic sway of satraps, kings, and tyrants. So numerous were the free citizens of Rome in the early days of the empire, that by the census of Claudius, we are told by Gibbon they amounted to 6,945,000 men,\* the greater proportion of whom, of course, were residents of Italy, the seat of government, and the centre of wealth, power, and enjoyment. While so great was the multitude of free citizens which the Republic bequeathed to the empire, resident and exercising unfettered industry in Italy, the cultivators of Africa and Egypt were all serfs and slaves, toiling, like the West Indian negroes, beneath the lash of a master. How, then, did it happen that the labour of the Italian freeman was disused, and at length extinguished, while that of the African and Egyptian slaves continued to furnish grain for Italy down to the very latest period of the empire? We are told that the labour of freemen is cheaper than that of slaves; and the free traders will probably not dispute that proposition. It could not, therefore, have been the slavery of antiquity which ruined Italian agriculture, carried on, in part at least, by freemen; since African agriculture, the fruits *entirely of slavery*, continued to flourish down to the very last days of the Roman world.

The severe taxation of the emperors is justly stated by Gibbon and Sismondi, as well as Michelet, as a principal cause of the decline of Italian agriculture: but very little consideration is required to show, that this cause is inadequate to explain this ruin of cultivation in the Italian plains, when it continued to flourish and maintain the chief cities of the empire with food, in Egypt and Lybia. Heavy as it was, and oppressive as it ultimately became, *it was equal*: it was the same every where; it might, therefore, satisfactorily explain the *general* decline of rural industry through the empire, and doubtless had a large share in contributing to its downfall; but it cannot explain the *particular* ruin of it, in the central provinces of this vast domi-

---

\* GIBBON, chap. i. 68.

nion, while it continued, down to the very last moment, to flourish in its remote dependencies.

But the taxation of the empire, *when coupled with the free importation of grain* from these distant dependencies, does afford a most satisfactory, and, in truth, the true explanation of the ruin of Italian and Grecian cultivation. It was a fixed principle of Roman taxation, that the duties allotted on a particular district should remain fixed, how much soever the inhabitants or industry of the province might decline. When therefore, by the constant importation of Egyptian and African grain, raised at half the cost at which they could produce it, the Italian cultivators were deprived of a remunerating return, and the taxes exacted from each district underwent no diminution, it is not surprising that the small farmers and proprietors were ruined; that they took refuge in the industry and crowds of cities, and that the race of freemen disappeared from the country. A similar process is now going on in the Turkish provinces. But without undervaluing—on the contrary, attaching full weight to this circumstance—nothing can be clearer than that it was the ruinous competition of foreign grain, raised cheaper than they could produce it, which rendered the same taxation crushing on the Italian farmers, which was borne with comparative facility in the remoter provinces, where land was more fertile, and labour less expensive. An example, *à fortiori*, applied to the British empire, where the free traders wish us to admit a free importation of grain from Poland and the Ukraine, where not only is labour cheap but taxation trifling, into the British islands, where not only is labour dear but taxation is five times more burdensome.

And for a decisive proof that it was the superior advantages which Egypt and Lybia enjoyed in the production of grain, and not any other causes, which occasioned the ruin of Italian agriculture, and with it the fall of the Roman empire, we have only to look to the condition of the Italian fields in the last stages of the government of the Cæsars. Already, in the time of the elder Pliny, it had become a subject of complaint that the *great properties* were ruining Italy\*—a sure proof, when the great division of estates in the days of the Republic—when, literally speaking, “every rood had its man”—that some general and irresistible cause, affecting the remuneration of their industry, was exterminating the small proprietors. Erelong cultivators disappeared entirely in the country, and the huge estates of the nobles were cultivated exclusively in pasturage, and by means of slaves. The class of small cultivators by degrees disappeared, and the great proprie-

---

\* “*Veramque confitentibus latifundia perdidere Italiam.*”—PLINY, *His. Nat.*, xviii. 7.

tors who succeeded them supplied their place by means of slaves.\* It is recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus, that when Rome was taken by the Goths, it contained 1,200,000 inhabitants, and was mainly supported by 1780 great families, who cultivated their ample estates in Italy in pasturage, by means of slaves.† For centuries before, the threat of blockading the Tiber had been found to be the most effectual way of coercing the Roman populace; and whenever it took place, famine ensued, not only in Rome, but the Italian provinces. The diminution of its agricultural produce had, long before, been stated by Columella at *nine-tenths*, and by Varro at *three-fourths*, of what at one period had been raised. Yet such was the wealth of the Roman nobles derived from pasturage, that some of them had L.160,000 a-year.‡ Agriculture, therefore, was destroyed; grain was no longer raised in Italy; Rome was wholly dependent on foreign supplies—but *pasturage was undecayed*, for cattle would not bear the cost of importation; and colossal fortunes were enjoyed by a wealthy race of great proprietors, who managed their vast estates by means of slaves, and had bought up and absorbed the properties of the whole free cultivators in the country. Such was the effect—such was the result—of a free trade in grain.

The advocates of free trade are not insensible to the superior advantages of the rising over the old state in agriculture, and of the latter over the former in manufactures. On the contrary, it is a secret but clear sense of the reality of this distinction, which causes them so strenuously to contend for the removal of all restrictions. They hope, by so doing, to effect a great extension of their sales in foreign countries, without, as they pretend, creating any diminution in their own. But the views which have now been given show that this is a vain conceit, and demonstrate how it has happened, that the more strenuously England contends for the principles of free trade, and the more energetically that she carries them into practice, the more decided is the resistance which she meets from foreign states in the attempt, and the more rigorously do they act on the principles of protection. It is because they are striving to become manufacturing and commercial communities that they do this—it is a clear sense of the ruin which awaits them, if deluged with British goods, which makes them so strenuous in their system of exclusion. The more that we open our trade, the more will they close theirs. They think, and not without reason, that we advocate unrestricted

---

\* "La classe," says Michelet, "*des petits cultivateurs peu à peu a disparu; les grands propriétaires qui leur succédèrent y supplèrent par des esclaves.*"—MICHELET, i, 96.

† AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, c. xvi.—See also GIBBON, vi. 264.

‡ GIBBON, vi. 262.

commercial intercourse only because it would be profitable to us, and deprecate our old system of exclusion only because it has now been turned against ourselves. "Now, then," say they, "is the time, when England is suffering under the system of exclusion, which we have at length had sense enough to borrow from her, to draw closer the bonds of that system, and complete the glorious work of our own elevation on her ruins. Our policy is clearly chalked out by hers; *we have only to do what she deprecates, and we are sure to be right.*" It is evident that these views will be permanently entertained by them, because they are founded on the strongest of all instincts, that of self-preservation. When we cease to be a great manufacturing nation, when we are no longer formidable rivals, they will open their harbours; but not till then. In striving to introduce a system of free trade, therefore, we gratuitously inflict a severe wound on our domestic industry, without any chance even of a compensation in that which is destined for the foreign markets. We let in their goods into our harbours, but we do not obtain admission, nor will we ever obtain admission, for ours into theirs. The reciprocity is, and ever must be, all on one side.

It is by mistaking the dominant influence among the continental states, that so large a portion of the community are deceived on this subject. They say, if we take their grain and cattle, they will take our cotton goods; that their system of exclusion is entirely a consequence of, and retaliation for, ours. Can they produce a single instance in which our concessions in favour of their rude produce have led to a corresponding return in favour of ours? How can it be so, when in all old states the monied is the prevailing interest which sways the determinations of government? The landholders, separated from each other, without capital, almost all burdened with debt, are in general no match in the domestic struggle for the manufacturing and commercial interests. Their superiority is founded on a very clear footing—the same which has rendered the British House of Commons omnipotent. *They hold the purse.* It is their loans which support the credit of Government; it is by the customs which their imports pay that the public revenue is to be chiefly raised. The more popular that governments become, the more strongly will their influences appear in the war of tariffs. If pure democracies were established in all the neighbouring states, we would be met in them all by a duty of sixty per cent on all imports from Great Britain. Witness the American tariff of 1842, and the progressive increases of duties against us since the popular revolutions in France, Belgium, and Portugal.

Is, then, a free and unrestrained system of commercial intercourse impossible between nations, and must it ever end in a war

of tariffs and the pacific infliction of mutual injury? We consider it is impossible between two nations, both manufacturing, or aspiring to be so, and in the same, or nearly the same, age and social circumstances. It is mere folly to attempt it; because interests which must clash, are continually arising on both parts, and reciprocity, if attempted, is on one side only. With such nations, the only wisdom is, to conclude treaties, not of reciprocity, but of *commerce*; that is, treaties in which, in consideration of certain branches of our manufactures being admitted on favourable terms, we agree to admit certain articles of their produce on equally advantageous conditions. Thus, a treaty, by which we agree to admit, for a moderate duty, the wines of France, which we can never rival, in return for their admitting our iron and cotton goods on similar terms, would be a measure of equal benefit to both countries. It would be as wise a measure as Mr Huskisson's reduction of the duties on French silks, gloves, and clocks, was a gratuitous and unwarranted injury to those staple branches of our own industry. The only countries to which the reciprocity system is really applicable, are distant states in an early state of civilization, whose natural products are essentially different from our own, and whose stage of advancement is not such as to have made them enter on the career of manufacture, of jealousy, and of tariffs. Colonies unite all these advantages; and it is in them that the real sources of our strength, and the only secure market for our produce, are to be found.

The free traders seem not insensible to these inevitable results of their favourite principles; but they meet them by describing such consequences as rather advantageous than injurious. If England, say they, can raise iron and cotton goods cheaper than Poland, and Poland and Russia grain cheaper than England, then the interests of each require that they should follow out these branches of industry, and it is impolitic to strive against it. Let, then, England admit foreign grain on a nominal duty, and this will in the end induce Russia and Prussia to admit English manufactured goods on equally favourable terms; and thus the real interests of both countries will in the end be promoted.

Wheat, it is said, can be raised in Poland at from fifteen to twenty shillings a-quarter, and it may be laid down at any time at any harbour in Great Britain at from twenty-five to thirty shillings. If, then, the harbours were permanently opened, we should obtain provisions at little more than half the price which we at present pay for them. The advantages of such a change would be incalculable; every poor man would find himself suddenly in possession of double his income. The large surplus which would remain at the disposal of all classes, after providing for their necessary wants, would immensely increase their general

comfort, and proportionally augment the quantity of the luxuries and conveniences of life they would be enabled to purchase. The home market for our manufacturers would thus increase with the prosperity of all the industrious classes. The foreign vent for our manufacturing industry would be equally extended, by the vast impulse which would be given to foreign agriculture by the increased demand for its productions in this country, and the increased wealth which our extensive purchases of their produce would diffuse through foreign states. The agricultural classes, or labourers, who might be thrown out of employment in the British islands, in the first instance, would speedily find a more profitable occupation for themselves and their families, by engaging in the manufacturing establishments, to whom this auspicious change would communicate an unheard of degree of activity and extension. All classes would in the end be benefited who really deserve encouragement—few, even for a time, injured in the disposal of their industry. None, in the long run, would suffer but the selfish aristocrats, who have hitherto saved themselves from insolvency, by levying an enormous tax upon the other classes of the community.

The supporters of the agricultural interest argue after a different manner. Experience, they observe, has now abundantly proved that the British cultivator, oppressed as he is by the weight of taxes, poor's rates, and high prices, from which the agriculturists of poorer or more fertile states are relieved, cannot maintain the struggle under a system of free competition. If, therefore, foreign grain be admitted free of duty, the unavoidable consequence will be, that the British cultivators will be driven out of the market; a great proportion of the arable land in the country will be restored to a state of nature; the vast capital employed in bringing it to its present state will in a few years be destroyed; the agricultural interest will be essentially injured; and if so, will the manufacturers find any compensation for the loss of their markets by the extension of the sale of British manufactures in foreign states? Will the cultivators of the Volga and the Vistula ever consume as much per head of British manufactures as those of Kent, Norfolk, or East-Lothian? And if they will not, are we not straining after a remote, uncertain, and contingent benefit, by seeking to encourage the industry of states who may any day become our enemies, to the detriment of our own neighbours and countrymen, whose habits are fixed on our productions, who consume ten times as much of them as any foreign population, and the market afforded by whose industry is steady, certain, and constantly increasing?

In forming an opinion between these two contradictory set of arguments, the first object of enquiry is, Whether the advantages

of a free trade in grain are likely to be as real, and its disadvantages as chimerical, as its advocates imagine?

Is it, then, really certain that an unrestricted importation of foreign grain would, in the long run, lower the money price of provisions to the British labourers? It appears to be extremely doubtful whether it would have this effect after the lapse of a certain number of years. Nay, it may be doubted whether the result in the end would not be, that the price of subsistence would be *raised* to the British consumer. It may safely be conceded that, in the *first instance*, the abolition of the Corn Laws would occasion a considerable fall in the price of British grain, because it would bring into competition with the British farmer an extensive class of producers who raise their farm produce on richer soils, under finer climates, or with cheaper labour. But would this effect be permanent? Would the price of grain, at the end of eight or ten years, remain at the low standard to which it had been reduced by the sudden influx of foreign competition? It certainly would not. The depression of price would immediately throw a large portion of British arable land out of tillage; the higher or inferior soils would cease to be cultivated, because they could not be cultivated for a profit; and heath or broom would resume their dominion over a large part of the now cultivated tracts in England. This effect would be inevitable; for although, in the end, rent and wages might be forced down by necessity to the lower level induced through the change of prices, yet we know by experience that this would only be the case after a protracted course of suffering on the part of both the agricultural labourers and farmers, and after the destruction of a large part of the capital now employed in the cultivation of the soil. In the interim, as the prices the farmer received for his grain and other produce had generally fallen, while his rent and expense of culture had undergone little or no diminution, he would be unable to continue his expenditure on the less productive soils, and be compelled to concentrate his efforts upon those to which nature has been most bountiful.

What, then, would be gained by such a change but an alteration in the class and the nation by whom our subsistence was to be furnished? The home growers would be depressed as much as the foreign growers would be encouraged in their operations. The market would not in the end overflow; it would only be competently supplied, and depend in part on foreign, instead of domestic industry. If Poland and Russia would produce more for the British manufacturers, Great Britain and Ireland would produce less. Farming, to the extent of perhaps five millions of quarters annually, would be destroyed in the British isles, and farming to a similar extent would be called into existence on the

banks of the Vistula or the Dnieper. But there could not be any permanent increase of the supply over the demand. Foreign competition would do for British agriculture what British manufactures would do, and have often done, when so admitted, to foreign manufacturing industry—viz. produce a total destruction of a large part of the deluged branch of industry. We might, according to Mr Canning's hyperbole, by so doing call a new world into existence to correct the balance of the old; but would we not, in the perilous attempt, submerge, as he has done, the one continent, in proportion as we elevated the other?

The fundamental error of the opponents of the Corn Laws on this point is, that they suppose two things to continue which can never co-exist in the same country, or even in the same district of one country, viz. *permanently reduced prices, and a permanently overflowing supply*. Common sense, as well as universal experience, demonstrate that no such result can permanently take place. It may ensue, and often does ensue for a time, but such a state of things never has been, and never can be, lasting. The manufacturing classes are well aware of this on their own side of the question. Give us, they invariably say, a free importation, and we will, by the superior cheapness of our manufactures, extinguish the production of every competing state. The main ground of their numerous, and at present well-founded complaints against the British government is, that they have neglected to stipulate for the advantage of importation at moderate duties with the other countries with whom we have concluded reciprocity treaties. Yet, strange to say, they do not see, or affect not to see, that a similar result must ensue from the unrestricted importation of foreign grain into the British harbours; and that the same necessity which would compel the one-half of the iron-masters of France to blow out their furnaces, if the hardware goods of Birmingham and Carron were admitted duty free into the French harbours, must compel the British farmer to consign a large part of his fields to the heath-fowl and the plover, if Polish grain is admitted duty free to the British harbours.

Holding it, then, as clear that the necessary effect of the repeal of the Corn Laws would be a great increase of foreign, and a great diminution of British agriculture, the question is, would such a state of things afford any guarantee for a considerable or permanent reduction in the price of the necessaries of life to the working classes of Great Britain? Nothing seems clearer than that such an expectation would prove, in the long run, in a great degree illusory. The impetus given to foreign agriculture would immediately and considerably raise the price of foreign grain, while the same causes would in the same proportion lower that of British. Polish wheat would rise from fifteen shillings a quarter to thirty;

British would fall from fifty-five to thirty-five. But would this effect continue when the produce of British agriculture, yielding to the effect of a competition which it could not withstand, was rapidly and progressively diminishing? It clearly would not. The foreign grower would gradually beat down the British, and get the monopoly of the British market into his own hands. The moment this auspicious state of things arrived, the competition being practically at an end, prices would gradually rise again; the foreign grower, finding himself relieved from the competition with the British one, would not be slow in raising his prices. The banks of the Elbe and the Vistula would wave with abundant and luxuriant harvests, while those of the Thames, the Mersey, and the Clyde, would in great part be restored to the wilderness of nature; but it is by no means clear that the operative of Manchester or Glasgow would eat his bread cheaper, because he had practically come to depend upon the wheat-growers of Poland instead of those of his own country.

Instances of the practical working of this principle are of everyday occurrence in the neighbourhood of every great town. If some essential article of consumption, such as coal, is raised in its immediate vicinity, as is the case in Birmingham, Newcastle, or Glasgow, and by the opening of a railway or canal, the same article is suddenly thrown into it in vast quantities from a more remote mineral district, where the cost of production is not a third of what it is in the crowded avenues to the city, the ultimate effect is, not that both parties continue their operations, and the citizens obtain the undiminished benefit of their continued competition, but that, after a short and severe struggle, *one or other is driven out of the field*. The party who can produce the article cheapest in the end prevails, and the moment that he finds himself relieved from the pressure of his antagonist, he immediately raises the price upon the now defenceless consumer. Look at a struggle between two rival lines of canal or railroad. As long as the contest lasts, conveyance or travelling is most signally reduced; but no sooner is one of the rivals extinguished, than the price is quietly raised by the victor up to its former level. Numerous have been the instances in which similar distant competition has been introduced by the steam communication of late years, in the supply of great cities with the staple articles of their consumption, and a great reduction of price has often, in the first instance, been the consequence; but no considerable permanent alteration in the price of these articles has taken place. Eggs, poultry, and vegetables are brought in profusion to the Liverpool and Glasgow markets, by the steam-boats from Ireland and the Highlands; but these articles are just as dear in the Glasgow market, if the difference in the value of money is considered,

now as they were before steam-power was applied to the purposes of navigation. The small farmers of Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire have been as much depressed by the change, as those of Ireland and Argyleshire have been benefited.

But suppose this effect not to take place: suppose that, in consequence of the unrestricted admission of foreign grain, the price of subsistence is permanently lowered to the British consumer—will any benefit thence in the end accrue to the working classes of Great Britain? If, indeed, they could succeed in maintaining their money wages at the existing level, they would be very great gainers indeed by the change; although the withering effect of the destruction of the agricultural classes would, in the end, come to react on this temporary prosperity of the manufacturing classes. But could the manufacturing operatives, or any class of labourers, keep their money wages up at their present level if a permanent reduction in the price of the necessities of life had taken place? Nothing is clearer than that they could not. The money rate of wages, wholly independent of the price of provisions from year to year, is entirely regulated by it, other things being equal, from ten years to ten years. If by the free importation of foreign grain, the money price of it is reduced one-half, the ultimate result will be, that wages will fall one-half also. It is impossible it can be otherwise; for even if the reduction did not ensue from any other cause, it would inevitably be brought about by the great impulse given to population, and consequent multiplication of labourers under the influence of undiminished money wages and augmented ease of circumstances, and an increased durable fall in the price of the necessities of life.

Past history and present experience alike concur in demonstrating this important fact. In the time of the Norman Conquest, the price of wheat was from three shillings and sixpence to five shillings a quarter; but nevertheless the labourers had not half the command of the necessities and conveniences of life they have now—for the money wages of labour were a halfpenny a-day during the remainder of the year, and a penny in harvest. Provisions are incomparably cheaper in Poland and in Russia than in this country; but are the Polish or Russian peasants half as comfortably fed, lodged, or clothed, as the corresponding classes in this country? Every one knows that, so far from being so, or obtaining any benefit whatever from the cheap price of provisions in their own country, they are, in truth, the most miserable labourers in Europe, and feed upon scanty meals of rye-bread, in the midst of the splendid wheat crops which they raise for the more opulent consumers in this country. In the southern provinces of Russia, wheat is often only ten, sometimes but five shillings a-quarter, from the total want of any market.

But what is the consequence? Why, that wages are so low, that the Cossack horseman gets only eight shillings and sixpence a-year of pay from government. Wheat and provisions of all sorts are much cheaper in Ireland than in Great Britain; but, nevertheless, the Irish labourers do not enjoy one-third of the comforts or necessities of life which fall to the lot of their brethren on this side of the channel. Their wages seldom exceed sixpence a-day. Thence it is, that when once they have got out of Ireland so few will ever return to it. Provisions of all sorts are extravagantly dear in every part of America, Canada, and Australia; but, high as they are, the wages of labour, from the rapid growth of these colonies, are still higher, and the condition of the labouring classes is beyond all precedent prosperous and comfortable. The mere necessities of life are sold almost for nothing in Hindostan and China; but, so far from obtaining any benefit from that low rate of prices, the labouring classes are so poor as to taste hardly any thing but rice and water; and wages are so low, seldom exceeding twopence a-day, that every sea-boy, foot-soldier, and horseman has two, and every native three attendants to wait upon his person. Examples of this sort prove how extremely ill founded is the common opinion, that permanent low prices must necessarily produce comfort to the working classes, and tend to show that Dr Adam Smith was much nearer the mark when he said, "High prices and plenty are prosperity, low prices and want are misery."

So much habituated are ordinary observers, however, to consider low prices as the invariable concomitant of prosperity, and so true is it that for a season, or even a course of seasons, which are particularly fine, the working classes obtain the full benefit of the reduction of prices, that there is no one proposition in political economy which will be more readily conceded by the well-informed, and more obstinately resisted by the ordinary mass of observers. And the difficulty of acquiring just views on this subject is much increased by the fact, that—though the money wages of labour in the long run necessarily sink with the fall in the price of provisions, and, consequently, the wellbeing of the population in the end has no connexion with the money price of provisions—yet the *density* of the population, and the *capacity of the state* to maintain in comfort an increase of inhabitants, are in a great degree dependent upon the fertility of the soil, and the money price at which provisions can be obtained for the people. Other things being equal, unquestionably the plains of Lombardy or the provinces of Brabant, will be more populous than the sands of Bordeaux or the heaths of Old Castile. But, without disputing that the capacity of the soil to yield an increase of subsistence is the most important element in considering the means

of future increase which are afforded to the people, there is nothing more certain than that such capability is no test whatever either of their present or future prosperity. No further proof of this is necessary than what is afforded by the Irish Catholics swarming in rags and poverty in one of the richest and most abundant soils in Europe, while the Scotch peasantry are living in comparative affluence and comfort on the churlish soil and under the clouded skies of Caledonia.

Further, there are two objections to this system. In the first place, it is impracticable if it were expedient. In the second, it is inexpedient if it were practicable.

It is impracticable if it were expedient. Theoretical writers may coolly discuss in their closets the total destruction of various important branches of industry, the "absorption" of the persons engaged in them in other pursuits, and the transference of national capital and industry from agriculture to manufactures, and *vice versa*; but it is impossible to effect such changes by the voluntary act of government, even in the most despotic country. We say by the voluntary act of government, because there is no doubt that they may be effected, though at an enormous sacrifice of life, wealth, and happiness, by the silent and unobserved operation of the laws of nature, which are irresistible; as was the case with the transference of industry from agriculture to pasturage, under the effect of free trade in grain in the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, in the later stages of the Roman empire; or from manufactures to agriculture, from the consequences of the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, in the Italian republics in modern times. But no government, not even that of the Czar Peter or Sultaun Mahmoud, could succeed in destroying or nipping in the bud branches of national industry, by simple acts of the legislature or sovereign authority, not imposed by external and irresistible authority. The Emperor Paul tried it, and got a sash twisted about his neck, according to the established fashion of that country, for his pains. The Whigs tried it, and were turned out of office in consequence. All the governments of Europe, despotic, constitutional, and democratic, meet our concessions in favour of free trade by increased protection to their manufactures. They dare not destroy their rising commercial wealth any more than we dare destroy our old colossal agricultural investments. The republicans of America even exceed them in the race of tariffs and protection. Sixty-two per cent has lately been laid on our British iron goods in return for Sir Robert Peel's tariff; a similar duty on iron and cotton goods, it is well known, is contemplated in the Prussian leagues in Germany. The British government has at length, through its prime minister, spoken out firmly in support of the existing Corn Laws. The

feeling of the agricultural counties, as evinced at the late meetings, left them no alternative. All nations, under all varieties of government, situation, race, and political circumstances, concur in rising up to resist the doctrines of free trade. Necessity has enlightened, experience has taught them; a very clear motive urges them on, which is not likely to decline in strength with the progress of time—it is the instinct of self-preservation.

Such a system as the free-traders advocate, if practicable, would be to the last degree inexpedient.

What would be its result? Why, that one country would become wholly, or in great part, agricultural, and the other wholly, or in great part, manufacturing. Is this a result desirable to either? Admitting that a city or small state, which has no territory which can furnish any considerable proportion of the subsistence which it requires, like Holland, may do well to attend exclusively to manufactures and commerce; or a country which, by the rigour of nature, or the remoteness of its situation, cannot attain to commercial or manufacturing greatness, would do well to attend exclusively to the cultivation of the productions of the earth; the question which here occurs—Is such a system advisable or expedient for a nation which has received from the bounty of nature the means of rising to greatness in *both*—such as Great Britain, Russia, or Prussia? The free-traders would have England sacrifice its agriculture to its manufactures, and Russia sacrifice its manufactures to its agriculture. Would such a system benefit either? Would England be happier or richer, more stable or more moral, if the already colossal amount of its manufactures were trebled; or Russia, if its rising iron and woollen fabrics were destroyed, and its industry confined exclusively to the slow returns of agricultural labour? Is it desirable that the zone of tall chimneys, sickly faces, brick houses, and crowded jails, which at present spans across the whole of England and part of Scotland, should be doubled and trebled in breadth; and the fertile fields of Kent, Norfolk, and East-Lothian, be reduced to vast unenclosed pastures, such as overspread Italy in the later stages of the Roman empire? Or is it desirable to Russia and Prussia that they should be for ever chained to the labour of boors, serfs, and shepherds, and all the vivifying and unimportant effects of commercial wealth be denied to their exertions? Nature has designed, experience recommends, a very different system. History tells us in all parts of the world, that it is in the *intermixture* of commerce and agriculture that the best security is to be found for social happiness and advancement, and the most effectual antidote provided to the evils with which either, when existing alone, is so prone. Mr M'Culloch has told us, that the commerce and manufactures of Great Britain have now risen to such

a prodigious height, that any further extension of them is undesirable, and that no real patriot would have desired them to have become so extensive as they already are. Is it expedient, in such a state of matters, to go on increasing the same splendid but perilous system, and to do so at the expense of the great pillar of national wealth, security, and independence—the land of the state?

As little is there any foundation for the opinion which commonly passes as an axiom incapable of dispute with the opponents of the Corn Laws, that a free trade in grain with the Continent would immensely extend the market that would be opened for our manufactures in the states benefited by our purchases of grain. For, in the first place, what security have we that these great grain countries, particularly Russia, Poland, and Prussia, which are at this moment entirely subject to the influence of the Czar, will ever make any concessions in return for the favour of their produce? All past experience demonstrates that they will gladly accept any relaxation on our part in favour of their agriculture, but as strenuously resist any relaxation on their part in favour of our manufactures. Their *reciprocity* is all on one side. They will thankfully take every thing, but give nothing. This may be unreasonable—absurd—and, in the end, impolitic; but we assert it as a fact, and we must deal with mankind as they are, not risk hazardous innovations upon speculations on what they *should* be. We abandoned our navigation laws in order to conciliate Prussia, and she immediately met us with the Prusso-Germanic league, which arrayed five-and-twenty millions of Germans in a hostile commercial combination against this country, and practically loaded all British manufactures, through the whole extent of their territories, with an *ad valorem* duty practically amounting to fifty per cent. We equalized the duties on French and Portuguese wines, in the hope that the Cabinet of the Tuileries would make a similar concession in favour of the manufactures of this country; but they instantly laid on additional duties on British linens, and we have looked in vain for any reduction of the French duties on British iron or cotton goods. We concluded a reciprocity treaty in 1826 with Sweden and Norway, as usual all on one side; and hardly a year has since elapsed which has not been marked with a fresh imposition of duties on British goods and manufactures in the Scandinavian harbours. We have taken Belgium and Portugal under our peculiar protection, and, in fact, solely propped up their existence during the last seven years; and, in return, they have loaded our manufactures with such progressively increasing duties, that the British exports to both these countries are now £500,000 a-year less than they were prior to 1820,

when our revolutionary protection commenced. In 1841, Sir Robert Peel made the great reduction of foreign duties contained in his celebrated tariff, and in the succeeding year gave the Americans the means, through Canada, of sending corn into Britain at 3s. a quarter and the cost of transit—and what was the result? Why, that the Americans, seeing us in such an accommodating humour, immediately laid on their heavy duties, varying from 30 to 60 per cent on British goods sent out to the United States, which have reduced our exports to them to a fourth of their former amount. These facts demonstrate on how precarious a footing any hopes are rested of our obtaining any concessions in favour of British manufactures from any relaxation, how important soever on our part, on foreign agricultural industry, and how obstinately other nations cling to the system of prohibitory protections to their own manufactures, notwithstanding the most unreserved advances on our part to a more liberal system of commercial policy.

But even if it were otherwise, and we possessed a perfect security, that, by abolishing the duties on foreign corn, we should succeed in obtaining a free importation for our goods into the northern states, is there any ground for supposing—and here is the vital point of the argument—that such extension of the foreign market would, upon the whole, afford any benefit to the British manufacturers? No one, indeed, can for an instant doubt, that if our manufacturers could *retain the home market for their produce at its present level*, and at the same time obtain, by the free importation of foreign grain, a proportional extension of the foreign market for their produce in the grain states of the Continent, they would be very great gainers indeed by the change. But would they be able to do this? And would not the transference of our orders for grain from domestic to foreign agriculturists, necessarily induce as great a diminution in the *home market* for our manufactures as it occasioned an increase in the foreign? That is the essential point of the case; but, nevertheless, it is continually overlooked by the opponents of the Corn Laws, who uniformly hold out an extension of the foreign sale for our manufactures, upon the whole, as a necessary and immediate result of the abolition of our duties on foreign grain, wilfully shutting their eyes to the *simultaneous* and at least equal decline of the home market. But is it not as clear as any proposition in arithmetic, that the quantity required for the wants of our people remaining the same, no advantage could possibly accrue to our manufacturers, by transferring their encouragement to agriculture from the home market to foreign states? If, in consequence of living in great part on Polish grain, the Polish landholders and cultivators are so much enriched as to be able to purchase a greater quantity of our manufactures, it is quite

clear that the British farmers, who at present exclusively supply the home market, would be impoverished to the same extent, and that what is gained on the one side would be lost on the other. If the grain at present consumed by the inhabitants of the United Kingdom is thirty millions of quarters, all raised by the home growers, which is probably not far from the mark, and, in consequence of the abolition of the Corn Laws, five millions of these quarters were to come to be habitually provided for us by foreign states, the market for our manufactures would in no degree be extended. British agriculture would produce five millions of quarters less, and Polish agriculture five millions of quarters more; but still the supply of thirty millions of quarters would remain the same, and the extension of our foreign exports, by the creation of five millions of quarters of new foreign grain, would be exactly compensated by the contraction of the home market for five millions of quarters previously in the course of annual production in the British Islands.

But, in truth, this is putting the argument a great deal too favourably for the Anti-corn-law party; for nothing can be more apparent than that, by such a transfer of agriculture from the British islands to the shores of the Vistula, the possible, or perhaps probable extension of the market for our manufactures, by the increased wealth thrown into foreign states, would bear no sort of proportion to the certain diminution of the home market from the depression of our agriculture. Dr Adam Smith has long ago stated, that the most profitable trade for every state is that which is carried on between the town and the country, and that the home market for our manufactures is worth all foreign markets put together. It is a much more profitable thing to have a good market in our next door neighbour than in a distant state. The habits of our own people are formed to the consumption of our own manufactures in the first instance, and the purchase of foreign luxuries only in the second. In foreign countries the case is the reverse: their principal consumption is of their own articles of luxury, and a very small portion of their earnings goes to luxuries of any sort. A much larger proportion of the wealth derived from the sale of their produce will be employed in the purchase of our manufactures, if they are fed by their own farmers, than if they are fed by those of foreign states. If ten millions' worth of Baltic grain is purchased for the British market, a considerable part of it may, perhaps, return to our operatives in the shape of an extended demand for British manufactures. But a much larger proportion of the same sum will take that profitable direction, if it is laid out in the purchase of grain raised in Great Britain and Ireland. The reason is obvious. British manufactures are a necessary to the British farmers and cultivators; but to the foreign landholders or cultivators great part of our manufac-

tures are unknown luxuries. A large portion of the agricultural wealth on the Continent will be spent on *Continental* luxuries, and a comparatively small proportion will be directed towards the purchase of articles manufactured in the British islands.

Is it not, then, plain that the only effect of abolishing the protective duty on corn would be, *even if they did consent to take our manufactures*, to transfer the purchase of these manufactures from home growers of grain to foreign growers, without making any addition to the sum total of the demand for the manufacturing produce of the nation? If the annual consumption of grain by the present inhabitants of Great Britain is thirty millions of quarters, and that for some years prior to the disastrous harvest of 1838, this amount has been yearly raised by the united cultivators of the united empire, what benefit would accrue to the British manufacturers by having the production of a half, or a third of this produce transferred from British to foreign powers? Would their condition be improved—would the market for their produce be increased—if, instead of the whole thirty millions being raised by the farmers of Great Britain and Ireland, a third of it were to be transferred to the farmers of Poland and the Ukraine? Would not the former set of cultivators and purchasers, our own fellow-countrymen and brethren, be as much injured as the latter, our aliens and enemies, would be benefited?

But the case is infinitely stronger than this; for the preceding comparison proceeds on the supposition, that the “new world” of agricultural cultivators who are to be “called into existence” on the Continent, to supply the race of the old cultivators exterminated in the British islands, will consume as large a portion of British manufactures, as their predecessors who now flourish on the banks of the Thames, the Tay, or the Shannon. But it is utterly impossible that this effect can take place; and nothing can be clearer, than that any extension of the market for our manufactures, in consequence of the enlarged growth of grain on the banks of the Vistula or the Volga, would be a perfect trifle in comparison of that which would be lost by the cessation of the production of grain to the same amount in the British islands. The great consumption of our manufactures in the home market, has been owing to the enjoyment of freedom, affluence, and comfort, by the working classes, for many centuries; and at least as many centuries, and as much freedom and prosperity, will be requisite to bring the Polish or Russian peasants to a similar level or capacity of enjoyment. Artificial wants among the masses of the people, are of the slowest possible growth, even in the most favoured circumstances. To suppose that they will ever extend to any considerable degree under the present villanage system of Poland and Russia, is, of all absurdities, the most

extravagant. The idea that a Polish peasant, who now lives on nothing but rye-bread and water, who inhabits a clay-built cottage with an earthen floor, and is clothed in the coarse woollens of his own country, is to replace or compensate the loss of the Norfolk, the East-Lothian, or the Carse of Gowrie farmer in the consumption of British manufactures, is perfectly ridiculous. No man now alive would see any material change in the habits of the Polish or Ukraine peasants, or in the amount of our exports for their consumption. Whatever was gained by the importation of foreign grain into the British harbours, at the expense of the British cultivators, would accrue to the benefit of the Polish and Russian landholders, and they would expend it upon the manufactures of their own country, or the dissipation of Paris or Naples, leaving scarce a perceptible fraction to be diverted to the encouragement of British industry.

A zealous Anti-corn-law advocate, Dr Bowring, has, in the course of his late mission from government to examine into the effect of the Prusso-Germanic League, collected information of the most decisive tendency against the probability of the freest corn trade opening any considerable market for our manufacturing industry among the agricultural inhabitants of the corn-growing countries. From the evidence he has obtained, it appears that the peasants of the states adjoining the Baltic consume so little manufactures of any kind, that very little is to be gained, even by the freest liberty of exporting British manufactures to them.\*

Further, the proposed system is pernicious even with reference to the national wealth and interests of the manufacturers themselves, as tending to undermine the main branches of our national resources, and substitute encouragement to an inferior, to upholding of the superior market for our manufacturing industry.

Although, in the meetings where they address the agricultural constituencies, the free traders hold out that their measures would benefit the manufacturers, and *not injure the agriculturists*; yet nothing can be clearer than that this is a mere shallow pretext, put forth to conceal their real objects, and the effect of their measures, and that the result they *really* anticipate is as different from that as the poles are asunder. What is the benefit they

|                   | Great Britain.         | State of Prusso-Germanic League. | France.            |
|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| * Sugar consumed, |                        |                                  |                    |
| per head,         | 17.1 lbs.              | 3.9 lbs.                         | 4.3 lbs.           |
| Tea,              | 1 —                    | $\frac{1}{4}$ of an ounce.       |                    |
| Salt,             | 22 —                   | 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.            | 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ — |
| Cotton Goods,     | 9.2 —                  | 4.35 —                           |                    |
| Wool,             | 4 —                    | 1.67 —                           |                    |
| Woollen cloth,    | 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ ells,  | 2 17 ells.                       |                    |
| Coal,             | 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ tons, | 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ tons.            |                    |

—BOWRING'S *Report on Prusso-Germanic League*, 26, 29.

hold out to the community as an inducement to go into their measures? Cheap grain. What is the motive which stimulates all their efforts, and which among themselves, and in private conversation with all men of sense, they at once admit is their ruling object? *Reduced wages*; the hope of extending our exports in foreign countries by taking an additional quantity of their rude produce; and diminishing the cost of production to our manufacturers by lowering the price of food, and with it the wages of labour. The whole strength of their case rests in these propositions. Their influence over the urban multitudes arises solely from the continual reiteration of these alluring hopes. If these effects are not to follow free trade and the efforts of the League, in the name of Heaven what good are they to do, and why do they agitate the country and subscribe to the League fund? Sensible men do not throw away L.100,000 for nothing, for no benefit to themselves or others. But these prospects are as fallacious as they are alluring, and so a very few observations will demonstrate.

Considered in a *national* point of view, if the matter is brought to this issue, the great question is—Whether agriculture or manufactures are the superior interests in the production of national wealth. Admitting that the true policy for government is to protect *all* the branches of national industry, and stoutly contending, as we do, and ever shall do, that the real and ultimate interests of all are the same, and cannot be separated—the question comes to be, if one fiercely demands the sacrifice of the other, and insists that its interests are so weighty and momentous that all others must be sacrificed to them, which of the two thus placed in jeopardy is the most momentous; which brings in most to the national treasury. Now, on this point, the facts are as adverse to the arguments of the League as on all other branches of their case.

Take the sum total of manufactures in great Britain and Ireland, accompanied with the sum total of agricultural production, in order to discover which of the two is the more valuable interest—in order that it may be discovered, if matters are brought to that issue that one or other must be abandoned, which is to be sacrificed. The choice of a wise government could not be doubtful, if it were necessary to make the selection. The agricultural productions of the British islands amount to L.300,000,000 a-year, while the sum total of manufactures of every description is only L.180,000,000. Nor can it be said, with any degree of truth, that the agriculture of the country is dependent for its existence on its manufactures, and would decline if they were materially injured; for the example of modern Italy and Flanders proves, that three centuries *after* a country has ceased to be the

chief in manufacturing or commercial industry, it may advance with undiminished vigour and success in the production of agricultural riches.

But this is not all. The statistical documents which have now been prepared with so much care by parliament, and published by the accurate and indefatigable Mr Porter, himself a decided free-trader, demonstrate that, of the manufacturing productions, nearly three-fourths are taken off by the home market, and *four-fifths* by the home and colonial market taken together, leaving only *ONE-FIFTH for the whole foreign markets of the world put together*. The total amount of British manufactures annually produced is about L.180,000,000 worth, of which only L.47,000,000 is taken off by the whole external trade of the world put together, while no less than L.133,000,000 is consumed in the home market; and of the foreign consumption, fully a third is absorbed by the British colonies in different parts of the world. So that the home and colonial trade is to the whole foreign put together as 5 to 1. And, while the total produce of manufactures is L.180,000,000 annually, and of mines and minerals L.13,776,000, the amount of agricultural produce annually extracted from the soil is not less than L.300,000,000; or a half more than the whole manufactures and mines put together.\*

Further, if we compare the proportion purchased of our manufactures, which is taken off by foreign nations, for the export to whom we are required to make the sacrifice of our domestic agriculture, with what is consumed by our own native population, whether in the British islands or in our colonies of British

---

\* I. Manufactures and mines in 1840 in Great Britain and Ireland.

|                                |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| For export sale, manufactures, | £47,257,766 |
| For home market, do.           | 133,500,000 |

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Total manufactures, | £180,757,766 |
| Mines and minerals, | 13,776,286   |

|                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Manufactures and mines, | <u>£194,534,052</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|

II. Agricultural produce.

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| 19,135,000 arable acres at £7 each, | £133,945,000     |
| 27,000,000 meadows at £6 each,      | 162,000,000      |
| 15,000,000 waste,                   | <u>5,000,000</u> |

|                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Total agricultural produce, | <u>£300,945,000</u> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|

|                                                  |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| III. Export of British manufactures to Colonies, | 16,500,000         |
| Home Consumption,                                | <u>133,500,000</u> |

|                            |              |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Home and Colonial,         | £150,000,000 |
| All the rest of the world, | 30,757,766,  |

or 5 to 1 nearly.—See PLACKMAN'S *Stat. Tables for 1842*, pp. 17 and 22, (a most valuable work;) and PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, i. 177.

descent, the difference is prodigious, and such as might well, even for their own sake, make the Anti-corn-law League pause in their career of violence. From the table quoted below, compiled from Porter's *Parliamentary Tables*, and the population of the different states to whom we export, taken from Malte Brun and Balbi, it appears, that while the British population, whether at home or abroad, consume from L.3 to L.5 a-head worth of our manufactures, the foreign nations to whom we are willing to sacrifice the British agriculturists take off per head ONLY AS MANY PENCE. In preferring the one to the other, therefore, we are, literally speaking, *penny wise and pound foolish*.\*

Those principles have lately received so signal a confirmation from experience, that nothing but the most obstinate adherence to theory, in opposition to facts, or deplorable infatuation arising from the short-sighted views of mistaken present interest in the commercial class, could prevent them from being universally acknowledged.

The five years terminating with 1836 were years of extraordinary, it may be almost said, unprecedented agricultural plenty. The harvests during this whole period were so fine, that not only was the agricultural produce of the British islands almost adequate to the maintenance of its inhabitants, but the accumulated surplus produce of each of these years was stored up, in the hopes of better prices, until, in the year 1835, the average price of wheat fell to thirty-nine shillings and eightpence the quarter; considerably lower than it had been for sixty years. The price of wheat during all these periods varied from forty to sixty shillings a-quarter; and as the highest of these prices was greatly below that at which foreign grain is admitted at a nominal duty, of course there was scarce any importation of grain, at least for home consumption, or such as could get out of the bonded warehouses; the Corn Laws were in full and unrestricted operation, and the nation felt emphatically both the evils and benefits

\* Table showing the exports of manufactures from Great Britain and Ireland in 1836, with the population and proportions per head consumed of British manufactures in the under-mentioned countries, viz. :—

| Countries.                               | Population<br>in 1836. | Exports to<br>in 1836. | Proportion<br>per head. |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Russia, . . . . .                        | 60,000,000             | £1,742,433             | £0 0 8½                 |
| Prussia, . . . . .                       | 14,000,000             | 160,472                | 0 0 3                   |
| France, . . . . .                        | 32,000,000             | 1,591,381              | 0 0 11½                 |
| Sweden, . . . . .                        | 3,000,000              | 113,308                | 0 0 9                   |
| North American Colonies, .               | 1,500,000              | 2,739,291              | 1 11 6                  |
| British West Indies . . .                | 900,000                | 3,786,453              | 3 17 6                  |
| British Australia, . . .                 | 100,000                | 1,180,000              | 11 15 0                 |
| Great Britain and Ireland, .             | 26,000,000             | 133,000,000            | 4 17 9                  |
| —PORTER'S <i>Parl. Tables</i> , vi. 102. |                        |                        |                         |

arising from that state of things.\* This therefore was a period, according to the argument of the opponents of the Corn Laws, when commercial distress should have been most severely felt—when the stoppage of the import of foreign grain should have proved a fatal bar to the progress of our manufacturing exports; and the industry of our operatives, shackled by the inability of foreign cultivators to purchase their commodity, should have suffered a severe and accumulating depression.

Was this the case? Did the manufacturers of the country, during these four years, progressively decline? Did the diminution of our imports indicate that the prosperity of our own agriculture, and the stringent exclusion of the laws for its protection, were operating prejudicially upon the consumption of the nation, and particularly of the commercial classes—and did the progressive falling off of our exports show how materially our commercial prosperity was dependent upon the sacrifice of our own cultivators to those of foreign states? Let the returns for these years speak for themselves: they require no comment.

Thus it appears that, so far from our exports and imports decreasing during these years of increasing domestic agricultural produce and stringent Corn-Law exclusion, they were continually increasing; and that, immediately after wheat had been at the unprecedentedly low rate of 39s. 8d. a quarter, our exports had reached the unparalleled amount of L.85,000,000, and our imports of L.57,000,000.

These facts, inexplicable on the principles of the Anti-corn-law advocates, can be perfectly explained upon the plainest reasons flowing from the mutual dependence of every class in society upon its neighbour in civilized life. When agricultural produce is plentifully raised by domestic cultivators, and the price is in consequence low while the produce is great, every class of society

---

\* Table showing the Exports, Imports, Prices of Grain, and importation of Grain, annually, from 1830 to 1836.

|      | Exports. British and Irish produce and manufactures | Imports into Great Britain and Ireland. | Average price of wheat. | Wheat annually imported, Foreign & Colonial. |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1830 | £61,148,864                                         | £46,245,241                             | 64s. 3d.                | 1,663,283                                    |
| 1831 | 60,683,933                                          | 49,713,890                              | 66 4                    | 2,309,970                                    |
| 1832 | 65,026,000                                          | 44,586,000                              | 58 8                    | 469,902                                      |
| 1833 | 69,989,000                                          | 45,952,000                              | 52 11                   | 227,565                                      |
| 1834 | 73,831,000                                          | 49,362,000                              | 46 2                    | 176,321                                      |
| 1835 | 78,376,000                                          | 48,911,000                              | 39 4                    | 66,905                                       |
| 1836 | 85,229,000                                          | 57,023,000                              | 48 10                   | 241,743                                      |

—PORTER'S *Prog. of the Nation*, ii. 98; JACOBS, iii. 42; and PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, x. 69 and 73.

is materially and simultaneously benefited. The manufacturers, the shopkeepers, and the whole inhabitants of towns, feel the benefit of this state of matters in the plentiful supply of provisions, and the cheap rate at which they are able to obtain the necessaries of life. An unusually large proportion of their earnings can thus be afforded for its gratifications. If, in consequence of fine seasons, the quartern loaf falls from tenpence to sevenpence, and the price of beef from ninepence to sixpence, the whole difference between these sums remains at the disposal of the consuming classes of society. Experience proves that very little of the money thus saved upon the necessaries of life is stored up in the form of capital, so as to be withdrawn from circulation. By far the greater proportion of it is employed in the purchase of the luxuries or conveniences of life. There cannot be a doubt that fine seasons, from the cheap rate of provisions, puts above thirty or forty millions a-year more than they have in bad seasons at the disposal of the consuming classes of society, nine-tenths at least of which is laid out in the purchase of manufactures. It may safely be affirmed, that one fine autumnal month would at once bring round the manufactures of this country from the lowest state of depression to comparative affluence. Dr Adam Smith was far *within* the truth when he said, that the home trade of every country is worth all the foreign trade put together.

Nor is it a less important effect of such seasons of agricultural plenty upon the manufacturing interests, that the greater part of the quickened incitement to industry which thus exists is felt at home, and that not only is but little of it shared with foreign states, but the ruinous *drain upon the metallic treasures* of the country is completely stopped. This is a matter, as recent experience has proved, of the very highest importance. All classes of society being at their ease in so far as subsistence is concerned, there is an universal disposition to accommodate, to expand rather than contract purchases, and to extend rather than diminish credit. The effect of such a state of things, in a commercial community dependent almost entirely upon that most sensitive of created things, credit, is incalculable. Bankers, finding their profitable transactions daily increasing, and a general feeling of security pervading all classes, become liberal in their advances; and hence the universal prosperity which immediately ensues. Such was the effect of these causes, operating for four or five successive years, that in spite of all the paralysis to credit which at the commencement of the period resulted from Reform agitation, not only was government enabled to remit taxes to the amount of about six millions sterling; but the revenue, so far from exhibiting, as it subsequently did, an alarming deficit, showed a surplus,

not large indeed, but still perceptible, of from fifteen hundred thousand to two millions a-year.\*

It is perhaps the most important effect of such a state of things, that it thus effectually prevents that ruinous export of the precious metals to foreign states, which experience has proved to be so extremely detrimental to all, but especially the commercial interests of the empire. The necessities of life being extremely cheap at home, there is no drain of specie to purchase subsistence abroad, and thus our export trade, how great soever, is carried on chiefly with those countries and for those articles for which the export of our manufactures only is required; the ruinous but unavoidable exchange of specie for imported grain which ensues on scarcity, being stopped, mercantile speculation takes the more natural and salutary direction of exchanging the luxuries of British manufacture for the luxuries of foreign growth; and thus, while the home market is rendered ample by the vast surplus funds at the disposal of the consumers, the foreign trade is rendered at once safe and productive, by being turned into channels which exchange production against production, not gold against grain.

It has been proved that the nations from whom we import grain will not receive in return our manufactures, and will take nothing but gold in exchange for their grain; whereas those from whom we import luxuries that we do not ourselves raise, are quite willing to take our manufactures. Who are the nations from whom we must purchase grain? Being a bulky article, it will not bear, unless the prices are extravagantly high, sea-carriage from any great distance; and we must, therefore, draw our supplies from the neighbouring states. Poland, Prussia, and the southern provinces of Russia, constitute the great granaries from which our foreign supplies have always been derived; and from which, in particular during the great scarcity of 1838, by far the greater part of our imported subsistence was obtained. But these states will not take our manufactures off our hands, nor would they do so even if we were to repeal our Corn Laws. The reason is obvious. They are actuated by an indelible jealousy of our manufacturing greatness; and they are under the influence of men who are determined, at all hazards, to rival us in those

| Taxes remitted. |           | Annual surplus of Revenue. |           |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------------|-----------|
| * 1832—         | £747,000  | .                          | £721,377  |
| 1833—           | 1,000,000 | .                          | 1,440,151 |
| 1834—           | 1,200,000 | .                          | 1,410,427 |
| 1835—           | 480,000   | .                          | 1,767,693 |
| 1836—           | 200,000   | .                          | 2,075,991 |

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, x. 3.

industrial establishments in which we have so long taken the lead, but in which they think they can now, by a rigid system of exclusion, effectually extinguish our superiority. Of this they have given a decisive proof in the vital point of the navigation laws; for while we, twenty years ago, repealed those laws, and thereby seriously injured our own commercial navy employed in the intercourse with these states, they have not only done nothing to diminish the duties on any one branch of British produce, but have gone on continually increasing them; so that our exports to the northern states of Europe are now less than they were eight-and-thirty years ago. They would willingly establish, indeed, a reciprocity treaty in regard to grain as they did in regard to shipping; that is to say, they will admit our grain on the same terms on which we admit their grain. But will they establish a treaty admitting our cotton and iron goods without duty, in consideration of our admitting their grain without duty? Let the Prusso-Germanic League form the answer, by which, in consideration of the English having taken off all the restrictions on the entrance of foreign shipping into their harbours, Prussia imposed a discriminating duty on every article of British manufacture, which practically amounted to fifty per cent.

The countries, on the other hand, with whom we carry on a great commercial trade in mutual luxuries, the West Indies, the East Indies, Brazil, Australia, Canada, Turkey, Italy, &c., are actuated by no such jealousy of our manufacturing industry, and by no such political hostility or commercial rivalry; for this simple reason, that they lie in a *different latitude* from ourselves, and consequently their industry is directed to totally different objects, or they are our own colonies, and consequently our trade with them is in fact with ourselves. Our cotton and iron establishments are no subjects of jealousy to them; for they are intent upon the production of wheat or cotton, of tea or sugar, of wine or fruits, of oil or spices, of coffee or tobacco. The greater or more prosperous our manufactures are, the better for them; because they are thereby enabled to obtain the manufactured articles they required from Europe at a cheaper rate; while they, on the other hand, secure a larger vent for their own produce. Hence these distant nations impose comparatively inconsiderable duties upon our manufactures, but they take them off our hands as largely as we can furnish them; whereas the European states from whom we are compelled to buy grain, being in the same latitude with ourselves, and actuated by national or commercial jealousy, cannot be induced by any consideration to relax their enormous duties upon all our manufactured articles. And of such vital importance is this consideration in the present question, and so vast its effect upon our manufacturing exports to distant parts of the world, that while every inhabitant of America,

as already shown, consumes nineteen shillings and sixpence worth of British manufactures—of the West Indies, three pounds ten shillings' worth—and of Australia, eleven pounds' worth—every inhabitant of Prussia takes off only threepence worth of British manufactures, and of Russia only sixpence worth! And this is the reason why a great export of our manufactures, in seasons of agricultural plenty, and corresponding import of luxuries, is attended with no drain upon the banks, and no shake to commercial credit; while a great importation of foreign grain, consequent on a bad season, being necessarily paid for in specie, is immediately attended with both the one and the other.

Let us turn now to the bad seasons that have occurred since 1836, which have led for a considerable time to a practical repeal of the Corn Laws, and immense importation of foreign grain, and see whether experience has proved the results which the opponents of those laws uniformly anticipate from the large importation of grain, and whether it would be safe for the nation, especially with reference to its commercial interest, to go on permanently with that system of importation of foreign grain, which was forced upon us by the bad harvests of 1838 and 1839.

The harvest of 1836 first broke in upon the long train of fine seasons. The rains in the autumn of that year, as every body recollects, especially in Scotland, were incessant; the prices, in consequence, rose considerably; and although the harvest of 1837 was somewhat better, yet those of 1838 and 1839, 1840 and 1841, were so deficient as to have given the nation a full specimen of the blessings to be expected from an unrestricted trade in grain. The harvests of the former of these years were so very bad, that the prices rose rapidly till the beginning of December 1838, when the ports were opened, and immediately such a prodigious deluge of foreign grain was admitted, that, as is well known, upwards of six millions in sovereigns were drawn out of the bank in a few months to pay for it; and although the prices subsequently declined in a certain degree, in consequence of the harvest of 1839 being not quite so disastrous, yet they still remained sufficiently elevated to admit of a very great speculation in grain, and a large importation into the bonded warehouses. The average price of the week ending 6th March 1840, being sixty shillings and elevenpence a quarter for wheat, and twenty-five shillings and twopence for oats—prices which, though not high enough to admit the free issue of grain from the bonded warehouses, were yet sufficient to have kept up a great speculation in grain stored in these warehouses, and consequently drained away, to a large extent, the specie of the country. And what was the result? Wide-spread commercial depression. The manufacturing distress which existed from 1837 to 1842, though not accompanied with the general panic of the great disaster of 1825, has been far more hurtful to

general industry, and felt far more acutely by the productive classes of the community. There is no man acquainted with commerce in any of the great commercial emporiums of the kingdom, who can doubt that this has been the case—that from spring 1837 to autumn 1842 was a period of almost uninterrupted and wide-spread commercial embarrassment. To those engaged in, or connected with commercial pursuits, all proof of this is unhappily superfluous. To those who are not, a glance at the instructive returns in the note, will amply demonstrate how seriously the national resources have been impaired by the combination of an extensive importation of foreign grain with commercial distress during those five disastrous years.\*

Now, admitting that the commercial crash in America, in the close of 1836 and beginning of 1837, was the immediate cause of the great commercial suffering of the year 1837 in the British islands in those classes which depended on the export sale, what is it that has occasioned the far greater, and far longer, wide-spread distress from 1838 to 1842? Evidently, the great drain of specie in the end of 1838 and spring of 1839, amounting to above six millions sterling, which annually took place for three years afterwards for the importation of foreign grain. Every farthing's worth of this grain had to be purchased in specie; for such was the effect of the onerous duties on British manufactures in Russia and Prussia, that the holders of grain would take no part of its price in British manufactures. The result was, that the drain set in so severely upon the Bank of England for specie to carry on this lucrative trade in foreign grain, that the stock of bullion and specie in their coffers was reduced in a few months, in spring 1839, from eight millions five hundred thousand, to two millions five hundred thousand sovereigns—that to avert bankruptcy, they were obliged, for the first time in English history, to open a credit with the Bank of France, in order to provide the necessary funds to meet the incessant demand for cash at their establishment; and that, between the immediate advances for grain, and the repayment of the sums borrowed from the Bank of France, not less than *ten millions sterling* in specie was drawn from this country within less than fifteen months.

The effects of this prodigious drain have been felt with extreme severity in every part of the civilized world. At home it immediately compelled the Bank to take defensive measures for their own security, both by restricting the circulation, and more effec-

---

|                  |   |   |           |
|------------------|---|---|-----------|
| * Deficit, 1837, | . | . | £726,000  |
| 1838,            | . | . | 441,818   |
| 1839,            | . | . | 1,381,938 |
| 1840,            | . | . | 1,750,548 |
| 1841,            | . | . | 2,149,885 |

—*Parl. Papers, Feb. 14, 1840; PORTER'S Parl. Tables x. 4, and xi. p. 1.*

tually drawing in their advances to other banks, and discount of bills. All other banking establishments throughout the country, of course, immediately followed the example. Money quickly became scarce; credit was abridged or suspended; bankruptcies speedily followed among the least opulent portion of the trading community, and that universal distrust and anxiety ensued which is at once the consequence and the cause of public distress.

On the other side of the Atlantic the effects were still more disastrous. The British merchants, driven to extremities themselves, were obliged to demand payment from their American correspondents of the large balances due to them since the year 1837; the United States Bank—the National Bank of America—stopped payment; every banking establishment in the Southern States followed the example; and although those of New York contrived to avoid coming to that extremity, yet they did so only by refusing credit, and thence innumerable bankruptcies. The almost total destruction of American credit has shaken that of even the greatest capitalists at home, while the inability of a large portion of the American consumers to continue their wonted purchases, has seriously affected the demand for our manufacturing industry among our best customers, who heretofore have taken above twelve millions' worth of our manufactured produce annually off our hands, being soon unable to take more than a fourth part of that amount.\* The general bankruptcy which has taken place in the United States, and the consequent repudiation of their state debts by a large part of the States of the Union, have been the result of these embarrassments, and are the fatal legacy bequeathed to us by the ultimate results of the practical free trade in grain which took place in consequence of the bad harvests from 1836 to 1842.

These results, occurring within the short period of eight years, and illustrating the opposite effects of the system which they decry and that for which they contend, are decisive against the arguments of the opponents of agricultural protection. In the first five years are to be seen plentiful harvests, abundance of provisions, a rigid exclusion of foreign importation, accompanied by the very highest degree of commercial and manufacturing prosperity. In the latter, a forcible repeal of the Corn Laws, occasioned by the badness of the seasons, which opened the ports—an immense importation of foreign grain, and the fullest experiment, upon a large scale, of the effects to be anticipated from a free importation of subsistence. The consequen-

\* Exports to the United States:—

|       |              |       |             |
|-------|--------------|-------|-------------|
| 1835, | L.10,568,454 | 1839, | L.8,839,204 |
| 1836, | 12,425,600   | 1840, | 5,283,020   |
| 1837, | 4,695,225    | 1841, | 7,098,842   |
| 1838, | 7,585,760    | 1842, | 3,528,807   |

—*Parliamentary Papers*, 27th May 1840, and 20th July 1843.

ces have been high prices—a general depression of the home market for our manufactures—commercial distress unsurpassed even in this age of vicissitudes, and a narrow escape from national bankruptcy.

If we would figure to ourselves, therefore, what must be the result of a repeal of the Corn Laws, we have but to imagine *the commercial state of the country from 1838 to 1842, perpetuated amongst us*. We have only to figure six or eight millions of specie a-year drained annually from the nation to purchase foreign grain—the screw perpetually applied by the Bank of England to the currency in order to enable them to withstand this pressure—every subordinate bank in the kingdom contracting their issues, and pressing their customers for payment of the balances or bills due by them—distress and anxiety universal among the trading classes—the revenue constantly falling from the progressive decline of exports and imports—and new taxes upon comforts or necessities of life imposed or threatened, in order to fill up the yawning deficits of the Exchequer, and we shall have a lively picture of the blessings which we may anticipate from the complete realization of all the projects of the opponents of the Corn Laws. It is in vain to say that these anticipations are chimerical or exaggerated: they have been realized to the letter by the experience of the last two years; hundreds on hundreds of the Anti-corn-law clamourers have been reduced to bankruptcy; hundreds of thousands of the multitude whom they strove to delude have been landed in the workhouse, in consequence of the results of the very importation of foreign grain, to increase which they were making such strenuous exertions.

It is no answer to these observations to say, that a commercial crisis like that which continued from 1839 to 1842, though it was doubtless owing to the bad harvests of that period, which caused all the specie to be drained out of the country for the purchase of foreign grain, is not to be considered as a natural or necessary attendant upon a free trade in corn; but that, on the contrary, if we would take off our duties on foreign grain, those countries would take off their duties on British manufactures; and thus the commerce, beneficial to both sides, would take place by an exchange of commodities, without that excessive drain on specie which has recently been felt as so distressing. Before the opponents of the Corn Laws have a right to *assume* that such will be the case, they are bound to show that a similar relaxation of foreign duties, in return for British concessions, *has taken place* in regard to other articles where the reciprocity system has been tried. Has experience proved that this has been the case? We repealed the Navigation Laws, and established the reciprocity system in February 1823. Have one of

the nations, benefited by that great change, relaxed a single iota of their duties upon our manufactures? Have they not all, on the contrary, increased them, insomuch that the nations who have been benefited the most largely in their shipping by our concessions, have contrived almost entirely to exterminate our exports in manufactures to their people.\* We introduced the free trade system, and lowered the duties on a great variety of articles of foreign manufacture—on French silks, French clocks, French wines, foreign fruits, and almost all the luxuries of foreign manufacture. Have they, in a single instance, relaxed one shilling of their duties upon our goods in which we have the advantage of them, and in regard to which, consequently, a real reciprocity might be established? Not one.—What ground, therefore, is there for supposing that the same men, who have obstinately refused for twenty years to make even the smallest relaxation of their duties on British manufactured produce, in consequence of our prostrating the safeguards of British industry at their feet, are to make any change in their system, hitherto so steadily adhered to, in regard to the matter of the corn trade? And would it not be well to see some realization of our expectations of a reduction of duties on British manufactured goods, in return for our repeal of the navigation laws, and the establishment of the free trade system, before we adventure upon the more perilous and decisive step of placing the national subsistence in their hands?

The cause is perfectly apparent which has hitherto prevented, and will continue to prevent, the governments of continental Europe from making the smallest relaxation in their burdens on British manufactured produce, in return for any concessions we have made, or may make to them. Being situated nearly in the same latitude with ourselves, their manufactured productions are, for the most part, the same as ours, and they are all making the most strenuous efforts to rival us in every department of mechanical skill. Though considerably behind our manufacturers in many important particulars, especially in the magnitude of capital, amount or price of fuel at their command, and the perfection of the machinery which they can obtain, yet there are other respects in which they have decidedly the advantage; among which, the water-power

---

\* The immediate effect of the Prussian Commercial League was the total exclusion from the harbours of the League of foreign coarser and commoner manufactures, of which a complete monopoly has been created in favour of the home produce. The protecting duty is so high as to prevent importation. It has gradually supplanted many of the coarser fabrics of Great Britain in the German markets, even in the cases where the difference of price and quality is considerably in favour of British goods. The shifting of the demand from the foreign to the native fabrics is every where conspicuous."—BOWRING'S *Report*, 53.

in some places, the cheapness of labour in others, and the absence of trades-unions and strikes in all, in consequence of the vigour and despotic character of their governments, are some of the most conspicuous. Their rulers, therefore, are persuaded that, by continuing the prohibitive system for ten or twenty years longer, they will be able completely to rival British manufacturing skill; whereas, by opening the doors of free competition just now, immediate ruin of their numerous and promising establishments would ensue. Their governments are thoroughly imbued with the same principles; they consider the prohibitory system as having been the nursery which raised British manufacturing industry to its present pitch of greatness; and to the extent and grandeur of British manufactures they justly ascribe the political pre-eminence which this country has long enjoyed. Regarding, as they do, commerce and manufactures as the basis of national wealth, they are fixed in their determination to admit nothing to interfere with the system destined for their protection. No relaxation or abandonment of British duties on foreign grain, would induce them for one moment to diminish their duties on British manufactures. Their principle is, that agriculture can stand upon its own basis; but that manufactures, especially before they have attained their full maturity, require the fostering encouragement of fiscal protection. We have seen this strongly exemplified in the case of France, the government of which has never taken off any thing worth mentioning in the duties on British manufactures, although we have reduced the duties on their wines above 50 per cent.

Nor is the example of America less instructive, which has met Sir Robert Peel's conciliatory tariff of 1842, which took L.1,500,000 a-year off the protective duties on foreign goods entering the British harbours, by a new tariff of unheard of severity, imposing duties from 30 to 60 per cent on all British goods entering theirs. Nay, it has already been announced in the French Chambers, (April 5, 1844,) that in return for Sir Robert Peel's bill of last session, which took the duties off the exportation of British machinery, the French government are preparing a tariff imposing a heavy duty on its importation into their harbours.

Nor is this all. Statistical facts clearly demonstrate that the projects of the free traders are as short-sighted and erroneous with reference to their *own ultimate interests*, as they are in regard to every other interest and class in the community.

It appears, from the most correct calculations which have recently been made, that the total amount of agricultural produce annually raised in Great Britain and Ireland, is three hundred millions sterling; and the total amount of its manu-

factures annually reared is only one hundred and eighty millions.\*

This fact demonstrates, in the most striking manner, both how much superior the agricultural interest in the state still is to the

\* In 1830, the following was the calculation of our statistical writers as to the comparative amount of agricultural and manufacturing produce in the British islands:—

Estimate of the value of produce and property annually raised in Great Britain and Ireland, by the combination of capital with all animate and inanimate power.—PEBRER'S *Statistical Tables*, p. 350.

#### AGRICULTURE.

|                                          |                     |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Grain of all sorts,                      | £86,700,000         |
| Hay, grass, field turnips, vetches, &c., | 113,000,000         |
| Potatoes,                                | 19,000,000          |
| Gardens, orchards, and nurseries,        | 3,800,000           |
| Timber cut down, hops, seeds, &c.,       | 2,600,000           |
| Cheese, butter, eggs, &c.,               | 6,000,000           |
| Manure and labour in rearing cattle,     | 3,500,000           |
| Hemp and wool, labour included,          | 12,000,000          |
|                                          | <u>£246,600,000</u> |

#### MANUFACTURES.

|                                                              |                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Cotton,                                                      | £31,000,000         |
| Silk,                                                        | 8,000,000           |
| Woollen,                                                     | 16,250,000          |
| Linen,                                                       | 11,000,000          |
| Leather,                                                     | 15,000,000          |
| Hardware,                                                    | 17,300,000          |
| China, glass, pottery, &c.,                                  | 5,900,000           |
| Jewellery, plate, &c.,                                       | 3,400,000           |
| Paper, furniture, colours, printing and book apparatus, &c., | 9,000,000           |
| Miscellaneous,                                               | 31,200,000          |
|                                                              | <u>£148,050,000</u> |

A simple calculation will demonstrate at once that the annual amount, both of our agriculture and manufactures, has greatly increased since this statement was made, fifteen years ago, and also that the relative proportion between the two has continued unchanged, or rather come to preponderate still more in favour of the agricultural production. The following is a summary of the relative proportions of arable land, meadows, pasture, and waste lands in Great Britain and Ireland, as given by Mr Porter in his *Progress of the Nation*, p. 177.

|                 | Arable and<br>Gardens. | Meadows and<br>Pastures. | Waste<br>Improvable. | Waste Un-<br>improvable. | Total.            |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| England.        | 10,252,800             | 15,379,200               | 3,454,000            | 3,256,400                | 32,342,400        |
| Wales.          | 890,570                | 2,226,430                | 530,000              | 1,105,000                | 4,752,000         |
| Scotland.       | 2,403,950              | 2,771,050                | 5,950,000            | 8,523,930                | 19,738,930        |
| Ireland.        | 5,389,040              | 6,736,240                | 4,900,000            | 2,416,664                | 19,441,944        |
| Lesser Islands. | 109,630                | 274,000                  | 166,000              | 569,469                  | 1,119,159         |
|                 | <u>19,135,900</u>      | <u>27,386,980</u>        | <u>15,000,000</u>    | <u>15,871,463</u>        | <u>77,394,433</u> |

manufacturing, notwithstanding the enormous increase of handicrafts of all sorts of late years, and also the essential injury which would be inflicted upon our manufacturers themselves, if, by a change of policy injurious to our own agriculturists, any serious diminution were to take place in the home market for their productions; for it appears, from the Parliamentary returns, that the total export of British manufactures, in the *declared* and present money value, on an average of six years, ending in 1842, two of which were the most prosperous that ever were known, was about £48,500,000, the numbers being as stated below.\*

Considerably more than two-thirds, therefore, of our whole manufactures are *raised for the supply of the home market*, and the home and colonial market is to all the foreign put together as *five to one*; and of the total wealth of the British islands, which amounts at present to above five hundred millions a-year, hardly a tenth part is produced by the manufactures for the export sales, the numbers being as follows:—

|                                                                                |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Total property annually produced,                                              | L.514,000,000 |
| Declared value of manufactures exported, on an average of the last five years, | 48,500,000 †  |

It is quite clear, therefore, that notwithstanding the plausible representations which they make of their immense importance to the national resources, and the vast masses of wealth which they

Now, in order to ascertain the annual value of the agricultural produce raised on these several districts, the following data are taken:—

Mr McCulloch states (*Stat. of Great Britain*, i. 476,) the average produce of the different crops in England as follows—

Wheat, 2 quarters 5 bushels.  
Oats, 4 quarters 3½ bushels.  
Barley, 4 quarters ¼ bushel.

Take the average of these different crops as 3½ quarters, and the average price 40s. of the whole over head, and the average value of an acre of meadow or grass at £4, and of the whole wastes at £5,000,000, which is Mr Porter's calculation, and the value will stand thus, in round numbers, as in 1827, when the calculation 20,000,000 arable acres at 3½ quarters.

|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 40s. a quarter, or £7 an acre, | £140,000,000       |
| 27,000,000 grass, at £4,       | 108,000,000        |
| 15,000,000 waste,              | 5,000,000          |
|                                | <hr/> £253,000,000 |

This was the calculation in 1830; since which time the total value of agricultural produce has certainly increased to £300,000,000 yearly, and the manufactures to £180,000,000.

\* Declared value of British and Irish Produce and Manufactures, exported:

|       |             |
|-------|-------------|
| 1837, | £42,069,245 |
| 1838, | 50,060,970  |
| 1839, | 53,233,080  |
| 1840, | 51,406,430  |
| 1841, | 51,634,623  |

—PORTER'S *Parliamentary Tables*, x. 15.

† FEBRER'S *Statistical Tables*, p. 350.

exhibit in particular districts, the manufactures for the export sales hardly produce *a tenth part of the annual income derived from the industry of the nation*, and will bear no proportion, either in point of magnitude or importance, either to the agriculturists or the manufacturers for the home market. The former produce at least five times, the latter about triple, the value annually created by the manufacturers for the export sales. Nothing, therefore, could be so impolitic, nay so absolutely insane, as to adopt any measure calculated to injure the interests of a class producing nine-tenths of the national wealth, for the sake of one creating only one-tenth.

The same conclusions are derivable from the survey of the different employments of our population. It appears from the Population Returns of 1821, that the total number of families employed in manufactures, agriculture, and neutral employment stood as follows:—

| Families employed in Agriculture. |         | Manufactures. |           | Neutral: |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------------|-----------|----------|
| In England,                       | 773,000 | .             | 1,118,000 | 454,000  |
| In Wales,                         | 74,000  | .             | 41,000    | 31,000   |
| In Scotland,                      | 131,000 | .             | 190,000   | 127,000  |
| In Ireland,                       | 220,000 | .             | 232,000   | 106,000  |
| <hr/>                             |         | <hr/>         |           | <hr/>    |
| 1,198,000                         |         | 1,581,000     |           | 718,000  |

The families employed in manufactures, therefore, are upwards of 300,000 more than those employed in agriculture, joined to those who gain their subsistence in other ways. Keeping in view that the produce of British agriculture is, in round numbers, three hundred millions sterling, while that of British manufactures is only one hundred and eighty, and that of the latter branch not more than fifty millions are raised for the export sale, it may reasonably be presumed, that of the neutral class, the dependents on agriculture and home manufactures will be divided from the dependents on foreign manufactures nearly in the same proportion; in other words, not more than a tenth part of the neutral class can be considered as dependent upon foreign manufactures; and the numbers of the people may be arranged, according to the interests in the state on which they depend, nearly as follows.\*

| * Families dependent on                                                             |           | Families dependent on                                                    |         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Agriculture,                                                                        | 1,198,000 | Manufactures for foreign                                                 |         |
| Manufactures for home consumption, (two-thirds of 1,581,000.)                       | 1,054,000 | market, (one-third of 1,581,000)                                         | 527,000 |
| Neutral class dependent on agriculture and home manufactures, (9-10ths of 718,000,) | 657,350   | Neutral class depending on foreign manufactures, (one-tenth of 718,000,) | 71,000  |
| <hr/>                                                                               |           | <hr/>                                                                    |         |
| 2,909,350                                                                           |           | 598,000                                                                  |         |

In other words, all the families dependent upon our foreign manufactures are not above *a fifth part of those dependent upon the agriculture and home manufactures* of the kingdom; and even adding to the latter class the whole of those employed in the foreign trade connected with our export manufactures, it may safely be concluded, that the population employed in agriculture and the home trade, and the branches of industry dependent on them, is at least five times as numerous as those engaged in the manufactures for the foreign markets, and the employments connected with that branch of industry.

Further, when the working classes are so exceedingly willing to impose upon the British farmers the burden of unrestrained foreign competition, are they equally ready to give them the benefit of a similar burden of restrictions existing in favour of their own industry? They are not. We hear a great deal of the necessity of allowing Polish wheat to come in duty free to the British harbours; but do we hear much of the propriety of admitting French silks, Swiss chintzes, Silesian calicoes, or Saxon cloths, on the same terms to the British market? The Anti-corn-law advocates profess their willingness to allow this; but none of their acts correspond to these professions. Yet it is evident that the British manufacturers are much better able to withstand a free importation with foreigners than the British cultivators; for, in capital and machinery, England is far in advance of any other country in the world, and capital and machinery are capable of effecting an almost indefinite reduction in manufactures, but they can effect a very trifling reduction in the cost of raising the necessities of life. The proof of this is decisive. Indian cotton, manufactured in Glasgow or Manchester by British steam-looms, is capable of underselling Hindoo manufacture in the Hindoo market, even when manufactured by persons receiving only three-pence a-day of wages; but we should like to see what profit could be made by exporting British wheat to Hamburg or Dantzic. The load of public and private debt, therefore, and the high prices incident to great opulence and an advanced state of civilisation, must always operate with much more severity upon the cultivator in an old commercial state, than upon the manufacturer; and, consequently, there is much more reason for contending that the latter should be exposed to free competition with foreigners than the former.

Holding it, therefore, as clear, that the manufactures raised for the export sale are considerably less than a half of those consumed in the home markets, and only a fifth of the home and colonial taken together, the question comes to be, even with reference to the interests of the manufacturing classes themselves—Is it wise or prudent to force on a change which may seriously affect

the prosperity of those classes, whose productive industry constitutes the mainspring from which the wealth is obtained by which these manufactures for the home market are purchased? Is it prudent to advocate measures which may extend the market for that class of our consumers who take off thirty millions' worth of goods, by levelling a deadly blow at the interests of those classes who take off a hundred and thirty millions a-year worth of goods? Considered merely as a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, as a calculation of profit and loss, it is surely an unwise thing to attempt to push the lesser market at the expense of the greater—to seek to extend a distant market of little more than a fifth of the dimensions, by crippling a nearer one of five times the amount.

But the case becomes incomparably stronger, and in fact altogether invincible, when it is recollected what is the difference between the description of *persons* who constitute the foreign and compose the home market. The foreign market is, in great part, composed of individuals owing allegiance to independent potentates, and who either have been, or may become, our inveterate enemies. The home market is made up of our own countrymen, brothers and friends, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—the sinews of the state, by whom its independence is to be maintained against foreign invasion, and its prosperity secured against domestic calamity. What will the operatives of Birmingham, Manchester, or Glasgow, gain by doubling the growth of corn in Poland, Prussia, or the Ukraine? Nothing but this, that they will augment the resources and revenue of the Czar, who wields at his pleasure the whole power both of Russia, Poland, and Prussia, and enable him to pursue, with increased advantages, any designs against the prosperity of this country and the independence of Europe. What will they gain by crippling the agricultural resources of England, and impoverishing, more or less, five-sixths of its inhabitants, who now depend, directly or indirectly, upon the three hundred millions' worth a-year of wealth created by its agricultural labourers? What but that they will essentially weaken and depress every branch of the community—diminish the best and most profitable market for their own industry—augment the weight of the national and parochial burdens, which, in default of the landed interest, must be borne by themselves, as the producers of its manufacturing wealth—and disable the state from maintaining that contest for its own, and the general independence of Europe, which sooner or later, in the changes of human affairs, must be borne by the state.

In truth, more momentous considerations than even those of national wealth or prosperity depend upon the vital question which is now at issue between the manufacturing and agricultu-

ral classes. The national independence—the national existence—is at stake. It requires little penetration, indeed, to perceive that the general peace which we have so long enjoyed, is not destined to be of very long endurance; and that a contest, possibly as serious and protracted as that with Napoleon, awaits us with the power which has already arrayed more than half of Europe under its influence. Few will contest the reality of this danger, since the aggressions and ceaseless strides of Russia are the subject of general and well-founded apprehension. What, therefore, can be so hazardous, it may almost be added so insane, as to forfeit the national independence at so critical a moment, by throwing ourselves upon the mercy of foreign states for the purchase of bread? It was a maxim with the Romans, “*Salus populi suprema lex.*” Every consideration must yield to the paramount necessity of providing for the *subsistence* of the people. At present that subsistence is amply provided for, at least the seasons of average return, as the unparalleled low prices of the six years preceding 1836 demonstrate, by the efforts of our own agriculturists, protected by the operation of the Corn Laws. Having secured, then, this inestimable blessing from a source within ourselves, and independent of the caprice or jealousies of extraneous powers, what can be so imprudent as to risk it again to the mercy of foreign states, the chances of the winds and the waves, or the still more uncertain results of political combinations?

But the impolicy of such a proceeding becomes still more apparent, when it is recollected that the power at whose mercy we are so desirous to place ourselves in this vital article of national subsistence, is the very power whose hostility, at the same time, we have so much cause to apprehend—against whom the national passions are often strongly aroused, and between whom and this country a more permanent cause of variance is to be found than in the opposite tendency of their national interests. Poland, Prussia, the Ukraine, are all in fact provinces of Russia—they all equally take the law from the cabinet of St Petersburg. Odessa, Dantzic, Memel, and Riga, are alike Russian harbours; yet these are precisely the ports from which our supply of grain must inevitably be obtained, if we throw open our ports to foreign competition. The provinces from which we must almost exclusively obtain our food, are those that wait at the beck of the Emperor Nicholas. To the permanent ambition of the Russian cabinet, the British possessions in India afford an attractive object of desire; to the jealousy and apprehensions of their despotic government, our free institutions and unrestrained press are a constant subject of disquietude. Every thing, therefore, both in political combination and national interest, conspires to indicate

that the seeds of permanent rival hostility between the British and Muscovite empires have not only been sown, but are already fast springing to maturity. And yet it is at the very moment that this fact has become clearly apparent to the inhabitants of both countries, that the infatuated manufacturers of England propose to place their necks under the feet of their formidable rival, by placing in his hand the keys of the granary from which they are to be fed! With what joy would the measure be hailed in the *salons* of St Peterburg! How rapidly would all apprehensions of the British power vanish before the effects of this one suicidal act! Vain, then, would be the prowess of the British arms—vain the recollections of their former glory! Without fitting out one ship of the line—without raising one hostile banner, the Emperor of Russia would easily beat down the once dreaded power and independence of England. By simply closing his harbours, by shutting up the granaries of Dantzic and Hamburg, he would speedily starve us into submission. The populace of Great Britain, deprived of their wonted supply of bread, would become ungovernable, as that of Rome was in ancient times when the mouth of the Tiber was 'closed' against importation of grain from Egypt and Lybia, and submission would soon be felt to be a matter of necessity. Can we, who, with our eyes open, propose to do such things, blame the Carthaginians who first surrendered their galleys and arms to the Roman generals, and then, when the legions were encamped around their walls, found themselves without weapons to withstand their inveterate enemy, and perished through the impotence they themselves had created?

Nor is there the slightest foundation for the opinion which is sometimes entertained, even by well-informed persons, that such is the magnitude of our manufacturing population, that the supply of the country with foreign grain has been, or soon will become, a matter of necessity; and that the evils which have now been described, however great, are unavoidable. It appears, from the table quoted below,\* that there were, in 1827, 46,500,000 arable acres cultivated in Great Britain and Ireland in corn or grass, and 15,000,000 uncultivated, but capable of improvement, being,

|                  | Acres.<br>Cultivated. | Acres.<br>Uncultivated<br>but improvable. | Acres.<br>Unprofitable. | Summary.   |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| * England, .     | 25,632,000            | 3,454,000                                 | 3,256,400               | 32,342,400 |
| Wales, .         | 3,117,000             | 530,000                                   | 1,105,000               | 4,752,000  |
| Scotland, .      | 5,265,000             | 5,950,000                                 | 8,523,930               | 19,738,930 |
| Ireland, .       | 12,125,280            | 4,900,000                                 | 2,416,664               | 19,441,944 |
| British Islands, | 383,690               | 166,000                                   | 569,469                 | 1,119,159  |
|                  | 46,522,970            | 15,000,000                                | 15,871,463              | 77,394,433 |

—PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, i. 177.

as nearly as possible, about an acre and three quarters under cultivation for each inhabitant. The average produce of each cultivated acre may be taken in grain, or other substance equally or more nutritious than grain, at three and a half quarters. The total amount of the subsistence that might be raised in the forty-six millions of acres would be one hundred and sixty millions of quarters.\*

A considerable proportion of this produce doubtless is consumed by the horses, which, by the last estimate, amount to nearly fifteen hundred thousand in the British empire;† and Arthur Young calculates that each horse consumes as much food as eight men, or about eight quarters, a quarter to each human being forming the average consumption for the whole year. Call the horses two millions. At this rate the horses would consume subsistence to about the amount of sixteen millions of quarters a-year; and supposing that triple this amount, or forty-eight millions of quarters, is required for the cows, butcher-meat, &c., in addition to the grass growing on 30,000,000 acres of mountain and heath, there would still remain land capable of producing nearly a hundred millions of quarters a-year, at the very moderate rate of three quarters and a half an acre.‡ This would maintain above three times the present population of seven-and-twenty millions in the United Empire, without taking into view the probable cultivation of the fifteen millions of acres of waste lands not yet reclaimed, or the probable improvements in agriculture, which, especially by the introduction of draining, may be reasonably expected to add at least a half to the assumed estimate of three quarters and a half an acre. Nothing, therefore, seems more reasonable than to hold that the British Islands contain within themselves the means of maintaining in comfort at least triple their present population; and consequently, all arguments drawn from the supposed impossibility of adequately maintaining our population from our own agricultural produce, or of the inhabitants soon approaching the limits assigned to the increasing subsistence, are perfectly chimerical and absurd. While, on the other hand, these facts demonstrate that at least triple the amount of subsistence may be extracted from the soil of the

\* 46,000,000 acres at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  quarters = 161,000,000 quarters.

† The horses paying taxes are 814,000—probably somewhat above a half of the whole.—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*.

|                                                                     |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| ‡ Thus 46,500,000 arable acres, at $3\frac{1}{2}$ quarters an acre, | 162,750,000 |
| Deduct for horses                                                   | 16,000,000  |
| Cattle and Sheep,                                                   | 48,000,000  |
|                                                                     | <hr/>       |
|                                                                     | 64,000,000  |
|                                                                     | <hr/>       |
|                                                                     | 98,750,000  |

adequate to the maintenance of 100,000,000 persons, after allotting the whole 30,000,000 of wastes, improvable and unimprovable, for aiding in the support of the cattle and horses.

British Islands than is at present obtained, and, consequently, triple the vent for our manufactures obtained in the home market from that which is at present afforded, and which even now, in its comparative infantine state, takes off a hundred and thirty millions' worth of our home fabrics, being above four times the amount of our exports to all foreign countries put together. What, therefore, can be so unwise as to run the risk of injuring an interest capable of such prodigious extension, and on which such enormous classes are dependent, which is withal entirely within ourselves, and beyond the reach of foreign jealousy or attack, for one of far inferior amount, held by an infinitely more precarious tenure, and susceptible of a much less considerable extension?

But, almost boundless as is the capability of increase in British agriculture, it cannot be denied that it is necessarily liable to considerable variations of price, and that the vicissitudes of the seasons, incident to a wet and unpropitious climate, must frequently occasion years of scarcity, and possibly, at times, bring about long-continued want, which may border upon famine if the resources of domestic agriculture alone were to be relied on by the people. It is of essential importance, therefore, that some means should exist to provide against the vicissitudes of price, peculiarly severe to a dense population, to which all latitudes, and more especially all northern latitudes, are subject. It is here that the beneficial effect of the present Corn Law becomes apparent; and it is by *its* operation that a permanent granary is provided for the subsistence of the people in periods when the home supply has, from unfavourable seasons, proved deficient, and when, but for its operation, no such resource could have existed. Under the present law, by which the duty on foreign grain, so heavy as to amount to a prohibition when wheat is between fifty and sixty shillings a-quarter, declines rapidly, till at seventy-two shillings a-quarter it becomes merely nominal, a certain reserve of foreign grain is provided in the bonded warehouses of the kingdom, which at once becomes available in the event of prices rising to that level, and renders it almost impossible, at least when the foreign harbours are open, for them to rise much above it. Speculators purchase up grain largely on the Continent during years of plenty, and store it in the British bonded warehouses, in anticipation of the rise of prices on the first unfavourable season. There the ample store lies innocuous to the British farmer during seasons of prosperity, when its aid is not required by the British consumer; but no sooner does the expected period of adversity arrive, than it issues forth in vast quantities to avert the calamity, and diffuse the

stream of plenty through every village and hamlet in the realm. Decisive proof was afforded of this highly important effect of the Corn Law, during the last three months of 1838, in the commencement of which the price rose to seventy shillings a-quarter, from the continued rains and bad harvest of the preceding autumn, but were immediately checked by the overflow of foreign grain from the bonded stores, and rapidly reduced, first to sixty-six, and subsequently to sixty-two shillings a-quarter.

And it is particularly worthy of observation, that this fortunate effect *could not possibly have taken place if an unrestricted trade in corn had existed*; and that it is the creation of the Corn Law, and the Corn Law alone. If a free importation of grain were permitted between Great Britain and the Continent, these great bonded reservoirs of grain in the British harbours would not exist. Food would be provided for a large part of our population by the foreign, instead of the British cultivators: the temptation of sale, at a present profit, would prove irresistible to the foreign importer: and the British warehouses of Dantzic wheat would be emptied as rapidly upon the first rise of prices as the barn-yards of the British cultivators. The home supply being greatly diminished, and the foreign proportionally augmented, the average supply would just be about equal to the average demand, and no reserve store would be accumulated in any quarter to supply the wants of the people in seasons of scarcity. But while a free importation of grain could not provide such a reserve store, for the same reason that it cannot be provided by the domestic growers in the British islands, it is effectually secured by the present Corn Law; which, prohibiting importation in ordinary seasons, yet permits any quantity of foreign grain to be stored up in our bonded warehouses, and thus permits the surplus produce of the Continent, in years of plenty, to be set apart as a reserve for the British population in periods of scarcity. We have recently reaped the full benefit of this wise provision; scarcity, perhaps famine, was staring us in the face, when it was averted by the fund which legislative wisdom had provided; and, while the manufacturers were clamouring for a repeal of the Corn Laws, they were indebted to those very laws, and to them alone, for the rescuing of themselves and their families from want during the next twelve months. The Roman emperors, aware of the danger arising from the destruction of Italian agriculture under the effects of unrestrained foreign importation, were careful to provide, at the public expense, vast granaries for the support of the people in periods of scarcity; but great as were the resources at the command of the Imperial government, they often proved inadequate to the herculean task of purveying to the wants of a numerous

population. That which the power of the emperor strove in vain to effect, the wisdom of the British legislature has effectually obtained; the resources of the state are no longer required for the mighty undertaking, but the certain purveyor, even for seven-and-twenty millions of human beings, is found in the enterprising body of merchants whom the desire of private gain has led into the paths of public good.

We hear a great deal of the expedience of a fixed duty on the import of foreign grain, and of the *natural* protection which, it is said, exists to our agriculture in the expense of transporting grain from foreign countries. As to the fixed duty, which is proposed to be taken at 8s., what sort of protection would it afford to our agriculture, even when combined with the cost of freight and charges of transport? Mr Cobden states them at 10s. 6d. a-quarter, which, with the fixed duty of 8s., would be 18s. 6d. a-quarter. The best wheat may be raised in Poland at 16s. a-quarter: but suppose that, in consequence of the opening of the English market, it was permanently raised to 18s. 6d. a-quarter. The price then would be 37s. a-quarter, including duty, and with a profit of 2s. a-quarter, or a ninth of the prime cost, to the merchant, the price would be 39s. a-quarter in England. Could the British farmer stand this, when he is already complaining of agricultural distress at 56s. a-quarter? And would not the inevitable result be, as already shown, that the inferior soils would all be rapidly thrown into pasturage, and the agricultural produce of the empire diminished, until the Polish farmers had nearly got the monopoly of, or at least the command of prices in, the market, when they would raise it again, just as a railroad company, which has succeeded in beating down a canal, raises the prices it charges on transit as soon as its rival is destroyed.

Further, this is on the supposition that, by the authority of government, the fixed duty of 8s. a-quarter is kept up on wheat imported alike in seasons of scarcity or plenty. But is this practicable? If practicable, is it desirable? Could any government set its face to so monstrous a proposition as that of taxing the food of the people during seasons of scarcity or famine, when the people are labouring under a want of food? Could any Christian community submit to such an enormity? The thing is obviously out of the question; and accordingly the ablest advocates for a fixed duty admit it could not be maintained during seasons of scarcity. But, if so, what protection will a fixed duty afford to British agriculture, when it is taken off the moment the price rises; that is, when prices compensating the deficiency of crop await the farmer? Would he not then be doubly oppressed, first by a scanty crop, and then by an unrestrained importation of

foreign grain, which prevented the failure being compensated to him by rise of price? It is the sliding-scale alone which can provide for the interests of the poor without injuring the farmer; because it favours the storing of grain, during the plenty of prosperity, in British warehouses, to be let out at a reducing and at last nominal duty on the approach of adversity.

Every thing conspires, therefore, to indicate that a free trade in corn would inflict an irreparable wound on our agricultural interests. And of the effect of such a wound on the manufacturing and commercial class, we have recently had a proof so clear and convincing, that it is deserving of the most serious consideration.

Every body recollects the five prosperous years ending with 1836—the most prosperous to the manufacturing classes which were ever known in Great Britain. In those years the *official* value of the exports of the empire, as already mentioned, rose from L.65,000,000 to L.85,000,000, the numbers being as follows;\* and our imports from L.44,000,000 to L.57,000,000. From 1836 to 1843, was one almost uninterrupted period of commercial distress, co-existing, as it did during the whole period, with bad harvests, high prices, and a very great importation of foreign corn. This importation, on an average of five years ending in 1840, was no less than 1,992,548 quarters.—(*Porter*, i. 146, and *Parl. Tables*, ix. 548.) Now, what was the cause of this distress in the manufacturing classes, which so strongly affected the revenue, that in the last year, before the income-tax came into operation, the deficit amounted to L.4,000,000 a-year? We have heard much of various causes of external embarrassment—viz. the Chinese and Affghanistan wars, the crisis in Australia, and the prodigious failure of the North American markets. But though these causes, without doubt, materially contributed to the untoward result, yet that the greatest cause

| Years. | British Produce and Manufacture. |              | Average price | Annual im-     | Annual Surplus |
|--------|----------------------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
|        | Exports.                         | Imports.     | of wheat per  | portation of   |                |
|        |                                  |              | Quarter.      | wheat, Foreign | of Revenue.    |
|        |                                  |              |               | and Colonial.  |                |
| * 1832 | L.65,026,000                     | L.44,586,000 | 58s. 8d.      | Qrs. 469,902   | L.721,377      |
| 1833   | 69,989,000                       | 45,952,000   | 52s. 11d.     | 297,565        | 1,440,784      |
| 1834   | 73,831,000                       | 49,862,000   | 46s. 2d.      | 176,321        | 1,419,427      |
| 1835   | 78,376,000                       | 48,911,000   | 39s. 4d.      | 66,905         | 1,767,693      |
| 1836   | 85,229,000                       | 57,023,000   | 48s. 10d.     | 241,743        | 2,075,991      |

—*PORTER'S Progress of the Nation*, ii 98, and 296; *Parl. Tables*, x. 69; and *JACOB'S Prices*, iii. 41.

These tables exhibit the *official value* taken according to a *fixed scale*, and for above a hundred years, which exhibits the true test of the progress of manufacturing exports in quantity. The *declared value*, seldom more than a half as much, exhibits the amount in present money which the exports are declared to be worth by the exporters.

of the commercial suffering was to be found in these bad seasons at home, and consequent embarrassment and distress of the agricultural interest, is decisively proved by the fact which, strange to say, we do not recollect having ever seen referred to in this discussion; viz. that the exports during the worst three years of unparalleled commercial distress *were greater than they were during the former years of unparalleled prosperity*. The figures taken from the Parliamentary returns are given in the note;\* and they decisively demonstrate, both that our exports during the years of unparalleled commercial distress were greater than in any former period, and how uniformly the greatest commercial suffering *co-existed with the largest importation of foreign grain*. The inference is unavoidable, both that *no impulse* was given to our manufactures by that foreign importation adequate to counterbalance the disastrous failure of the home market, owing to domestic scarcity, and that the long-continued and wide-spread commercial suffering arose mainly from the failure of the home markets, and the diminution of agricultural produce, from bad seasons, which paralysed the resources of our domestic population.†

We have shown how agriculture was ruined in the Roman empire in Italy—and, as a necessary consequence, that mighty empire destroyed—by the free importation of grain from the Lybian and Egyptian provinces of the empire. As a contrast to that woful progress, the main cause of the destruction of the empire of the Cæsars, we request the attention of our readers to the progress of British exports in official value, which indicates their amount from 1790 to 1840, premising that the *whole* of that period was one of *protection to the British agriculturist*; during the first twenty years of the period, by the effects of the war—during the last twenty-five, by the operation of the Corn Law and sliding-scale introduced in 1814. We recommend the advocates of free trade to search the annals of the world for a similar

\* The total importation of all kinds of grain in these disastrous years were—

|      | Quarters. |      | Quarters. |
|------|-----------|------|-----------|
| 1837 | 1,240,981 | 1840 | 3,462,135 |
| 1838 | 1,394,456 | 1841 | 4,772,641 |
| 1839 | 4,298,825 |      |           |

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*.

| British Produce and Manufacture. |                             |                             |                                  |                        |                                                            |  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Years.                           | Exports.<br>Official value. | Imports.<br>Official value. | Average price of<br>wheat per Qr | Annual<br>importation. | Quarterly defi-<br>ciency of revenue<br>below expenditure. |  |
| † 1837                           | L.72,548,047                | L.54,737,301                | 55s. 10d.                        | Qrs. 559 943           | L.726,000                                                  |  |
| 1838                             | 92,459,251                  | 61,268,320                  | 64s. 7d.                         | 1,371.957              | 441,819                                                    |  |
| 1839                             | 97,402,726                  | 62,004,000                  | 70s. 8d.                         | 2,875.427              | 1,381 930                                                  |  |
| 1840                             | 102,714,060                 | 67,432,964                  | 66s. 4d.                         | 2,483.267              | 1,750.543                                                  |  |
| 1841                             | 102,180,517                 | 64,377,962                  | 64s. 4d.                         | 1,948,121              | 1,750,543                                                  |  |
| 1842                             | 100,200,101                 | 63,204,729                  | 61s. 3d.                         | 1,241,761              | 4,073,129                                                  |  |

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, x. 71; and xi. 66 and 73.

instance of progress and prosperity flowing from, or co-existent with, the practical adoption of their principles.\*

The curious thing is, that the free traders seem to be fully aware of the advantages of an enhanced demand for manufactures in the home market; and they have made the most strenuous efforts to show, that by lowering the price of provisions to the whole community, this effect will follow an unrestricted trade in grain. They point to the vast impulse to the home market, which never fails to be communicated by a fine harvest, and consequent low price of subsistence, for decisive evidence of this position. They either do not see, or carefully conceal, the vital distinction between agricultural plenty and consequent low prices arising from abundance of domestic produce, and abundance of foreign importation. The first occasions the greatest possible stimulus, the last the greatest depression, to the home market. What will it avail the British manufacturers, even with reference to their own interests, and the sum total of their sales, foreign and domestic, if the foreign market is raised, by abolishing the Corn Laws, from L.30,000,000 to L.40,000,000 yearly, if, from the same cause, the home market is depressed from L.133,000,000 to L.100,000,000? Will it be any gain to them to extend their

\* Table showing the official value of British and Colonial exports and British imports, declared (or money) value of exports and tonnage of British shipping, in the under-mentioned years, viz. :—

| Years. | Imports.<br>Official Value. | Exports.<br>British and Colonial.<br>Official Value. | Exports of<br>British Produce.<br>Declared Value. | Tons of<br>British Shipping. |
|--------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1789   | L.18,372,149                | L.22,147,361                                         |                                                   | 1,272,114                    |
| 1790   | 18,921,347                  | 23,021,472                                           |                                                   | 1,321,231                    |
| 1791   | 19,619,858                  | 24,904,851                                           |                                                   | 1,363,483                    |
| 1819   | 30,776,810                  | 43,428,989                                           | L.45,494,219                                      | 2,666,396                    |
| 1820   | 32,438,650                  | 48,951,537                                           | 51,603,028                                        | 2,648,593                    |
| 1821   | 30,792,760                  | 51,461,434                                           | 41,657,873                                        | 2,560,203                    |
| 1839   | 62,004,000                  | 110,198,716                                          | 53,233,580                                        | 3,000,000                    |
| 1840   | 67,452,964                  | 116,479,678                                          | 51,406,430                                        | 3,512,480                    |
| 1841   | 64,377,962                  | 116,903,668                                          | 51,634,623                                        | 3,619,850                    |

It is evident, from the declared or money value of the exports in the latter periods being not so much as a half of the official value, which latter exhibits the real progress, as compared with the amount in former periods, that the money cost of manufactured produce has, by the improvements of machinery, sunk on an average of articles to considerably *less than a half* of its amount fifty years ago;—a striking illustration of the truth of the position advanced in the outset of this paper as to the superiority which, in the later stages of society, the *manufacturing* industry of the old and opulent community acquires over its younger competitors—the real secret of the hostility with which it is inevitably regarded by all its manufacturing rivals.—*See Parl. Pap.* 1843, and *Parl. Hist.* xxxv. 1563; PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, ii. 171 and 98; PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, ii. 92

sales by ten millions among the Russians and Poles, if they contract them by thirty millions among the Scotch and English? And yet if the price of grain, and consequently of all other agricultural produce, is lowered a third, as the free traders hope it will, by the removal of the Corn Laws, must not the annual value of agricultural produce, raised over the empire, sink from L.300,000,000, its present amount, to L.200,000,000? And can there be any doubt that such a reduction in the resources of the consumers, who now take off L.133,000,000 worth, yearly, of our manufactures, would at once reduce their annual consumption to L.100,000,000?

But, say the free traders, this is a landlords', not a farmers' question—the reduction, such as it may prove, will fall on the landholders, not the cultivators. *Esto*, for argument's sake, that it is so—will either the manufacturers, merchants, or farmers, be the better of their best customers, those depending on the land for their income, being ruined? The land in Great Britain pays L.2,800,000 income-tax, corresponding to nearly L.100,000,000 of income. Will the manufacturers and merchants, the dealers in, or producers of, *luxuries*, be benefited by this surplus, now enjoyed by the persons holding property on, or securities over, land, being reduced to L.50,000,000? Must not this cripple their resources so completely as utterly to ruin the home market, and occasion a loss which the instant duplication of all the foreign markets in the world could not compensate?

But, in truth, this statement of the Corn Laws being a landlords', not a farmers' question, is a total mistake, or a gross attempt at delusion. The cultivators would suffer *twice as much by the reduction in price as the landlords*; and all the manufacturers and merchants, who supply them with comforts and luxuries, would sink in the same proportion. To any one who reflects on the small proportion, seldom much exceeding a third, which the rent of land bears to the general cost of production, this must appear a self-evident proposition. A reduction in the price of agricultural produce by thirty or forty per cent, must strike twice as hard on him who receives two pounds of it, as on him who receives one pound. But the matter has been demonstrated by an intelligent Scotch farmer, himself holding a wheat farm at a *grain rent*, and consequently whose rent would at once come down with the reduction in the money price of grain. He has proved he would suffer twice as much by the reduction as his landlord, and, in truth, would be TOTALLY RUINED.\*

---

\* At the Paisley meeting, on 23d April 1841, Mr Snodgrass, farmer, Portnauld, said he rose to second the resolution proposed by Mr Maxwell, and in doing so, he would lay before the meeting a few practical observations of his own as a farmer. He had had some experience in farming; and in looking over

These facts, which in truth are altogether decisive of the present question, point to the great source from which the errors of the free trade party are derived, and which appears, in an especial manner, in their favourite position, that cheap prices are an unmitigated blessing, and that the great thing to attend to is to increase our imports. Cheap prices of grain are like the Amreeta cap in Kehama; the greatest of all blessings, or the greatest of all curses, *according as they arise from magnitude of domestic production, or magnitude of foreign importation.* Of the first we had an example during the five fine years in succession, from

the prices of grain and other kinds of agricultural produce, and the price of labour for a few years bypast, he was led to the conclusion that, to enable the farmer to pay every man—his landlord, tradesmen, and labourers—wheat ought not to be less than 56s. per quarter, oatmeal 20s., potatoes 12s. per boll, hay 80s. per ton, and cows L.10 each, annually. It was argued by the orators and in the publications of the League, that the abolition of all protection to the agriculturist would not affect the grain-rented farmer. But he thought this would be found to be a great fallacy. The rent of the farm of Portnauld, which he occupied, was a grain rent of nearly 80 quarters of wheat. The average sales of the different kinds of produce were as follows:—

|                                             |       |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|
| Wheat, 50 qrs. at 56s. per qr.              | L.140 |
| Oatmeal, 80 bolls, at 20s. per boll,        | 80    |
| Potatoes, 300 bolls, at 12s. per boll,      | 180   |
| Rye-grass hay, 2000 stone, at 80s. per ton, | 80    |
| 10 cows' produce, at L.10 each,             | 100   |
|                                             | <hr/> |
| Rent—Price of 80 qrs. of wheat, at 56s.     | L.580 |
|                                             | 224   |
|                                             | <hr/> |
| Balance,                                    | L.356 |

to renew stock, purchase manure, pay labourers, tradesmen's accounts, and other expenses. Now, let them look at the produce of the same farm in the event of the Corn Laws being abolished, and prices reduced:—

|                                                 |       |   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------|---|---|
| Wheat, 50 quarters, at 32s. per quarter,        | L.80  | 0 | 0 |
| Oatmeal, 80 bolls, at 11s. per boll,            | 44    | 0 | 0 |
| Potatoes, 300 bolls, at 6s. per boll,           | 90    | 0 | 0 |
| Hay, 2000 stone, at 50s. per ton,               | 50    | 0 | 0 |
| 10 cows' produce, at L.8 each,                  | 80    | 0 | 0 |
|                                                 | <hr/> |   |   |
|                                                 | L.344 | 0 | 0 |
| Rent—80 quarters of wheat, at 32s. per quarter, | 128   | 0 | 0 |
|                                                 | <hr/> |   |   |
| Balance only                                    | L.216 | 0 | 0 |

for the purposes enumerated above. The wages of eight labourers required to do the work on this farm, at 9s. per week, is L.187, 4s.; but let them take the wages at 6d. per day, as in most of the corn-growing countries on the continent of Europe, which would amount to

|                        |       |    |   |
|------------------------|-------|----|---|
| Balance to the farmer, | L.153 | 12 | 0 |
|------------------------|-------|----|---|

to pay for manure, tradesmen's accounts, tolls, public burdens, and miscellaneous expenses. The result, therefore, instead of being the same to the farmer paying a grain rent as under the present system, would leave him without profit, credit, or bread.

1830 to 1835, during which the foreign importation was practically abolished by the abundant harvests, and consequent high duty on grain under the sliding-scale. This was a period, as all the world knows, of universal and unexampled commercial prosperity. Of the second we had a memorable example during the five bad years in succession, which elapsed from 1836 to 1841, in the course of which the Corn Laws, from the effect of the same sliding-scale, and the continued low prices, were *practically abolished*; and importations, at the close of the period, amounted to above 4,000,000 quarters, and, on an average of the whole, were little short of 2,000,000 of quarters. And what was the result? The exportation of 6,000,000 of sovereigns in a single year to buy grain; an unexampled pressure on the money market; commercial embarrassments, long-continued, and severe beyond all former precedent; the contraction of ten millions of additional debt in four years, and the creation of a deficit which at length rose to the formidable amount, in 1842, of L.4,000,000 sterling! And what first dispelled this distress, and arrested this downward and disastrous progress? The fine harvest of 1842—the blessed sun of its long summer, followed by the more checkered, but also fine summer of 1843, which again gave us plenty, derived from domestic production, and consequent general and increasing manufacturing as well as rural prosperity.

It is in vain, therefore, to say cheap prices are a blessing in themselves, and the consumers at least are ever benefited by a fall in the cost of grain. Cheap prices are a real blessing if that effect consists with prosperity to the producer, as by improved methods of cultivation or manufacture, or the benignity of nature in giving fine seasons. But cheap prices are the greatest of all evils, and *to none more in the end than the consumers*, if they are the result, not of the magnitude of domestic production, but of the magnitude of foreign importation. It was that sort of cheap prices which ruined the Roman empire, from the destruction of the agriculture of Italy; it is that sort of cheap prices which has ruined the Indian weavers, from the disastrous competition of the British steam-engine; it is that sort of low prices which has so grievously depressed British shipping, from the disastrous competition of the Baltic vessels under the reciprocity system. It is in vain for the consumers to say, we will separate our case from that of the producers, and care not, so as we get low prices, what comes of them. Where will the consumers be, and that ere long, if the producers are destroyed? What will be the condition of the landlords if their farmers are ruined? or of bondholders if their debtors are bankrupt? or of railway proprietors if traffic ceases? or of owners of bank stock if bills are no longer presented for discount? or of the three per cents, if government,

by the failure of the productive industry of the country, is rendered bankrupt? The consumers all rest on the producers, and must sink or swim with them.

The true policy of Britain, therefore, both in regard to commerce and agriculture, is clearly marked out. It consists in three great maxims:—agricultural protection, to secure the independence and support the interests of the great bulk of the people, and create sources of wealth in the heart of the empire; colonial encouragement, to afford a vent for its growing numbers, and extend the market for its manufacturing industry, in quarters where no rivalry to that in the heart of the empire is to be dreaded; and the maintenance of a powerful navy, at once to form highways across the deep, necessary to cement the various parts of this immense dominion, provide the means of gratuitous emigration to its surplus inhabitants, and furnish adequate protection and security to its remote dependencies. To assert that these principles, so obviously recommended both by principle and experience, will ensure a permanent or even a lengthened existence to so vast an empire, would be to go further than human foresight can venture on the checkered depths of futurity; and he must be blind indeed who does not perceive that a dominion so widespread and powerful, must be subject to causes of vicissitude and sources of danger, increasing yearly with its extension, and which nothing but the most consummate prudence and foresight on the part of its government can for any considerable period avert. But this much may with confidence be asserted, that it is thus that the obvious duty to themselves and mission of the British race in the world, can alone be reconciled; that when their part on the great theatre of Nature has been performed, and they are to give place to future, and perhaps greater actors on the stage, it is thus that a foundation will best be laid for retirement with dignity from the scene; that, with least suffering and most glory, the transition will be effected to a stationary or declining condition, and the best preparation made in the discharge of present duty for the final advent of the inevitable hour!

THE END.

# WORKS ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL ECONOMY

PUBLISHED BY

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS.

## 1. The Book of the Farm.

By HENRY STEPHENS, F.R.S.E. Detailing the Labours of the Farmer, Farm Steward, Ploughman, Shepherd, Hedger, Cattle-man, Field Worker, and Domestic Maid. Illustrated by 35 Steel Plates, and upwards of 400 Woodcuts. The first volume may now be had, in royal octavo, elegantly bound in cloth, price 30s. The second volume is in course of Publication, and will complete the Work.

## 2. Stable Economy,

A Treatise on the Management of Horses, in relation to Stabling, Grooming, Feeding, Watering, and Working. By JOHN STEWART. A New Edition. Foolscape 8vo, with numerous Woodcuts, price 7s. 6d. bound in cloth.

## 3. New Series of the Journal of Agriculture

And the Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. Published Quarterly. Annual Subscription, 12s. Four Numbers are published.

## 4. Elkington on Draining, by Johnston.

A Systematic Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Draining Land, according to the most approved Methods, and adapted to the various Situations and Soils of England and Scotland, also on Sea, River, and Lake Embankment, Formation of Ponds, and Artificial Pieces of Water. The whole Illustrated with Plans and Sections. By JOHN JOHNSTON, Land-Surveyor. Third Edition, price 10s. 6d.

## 5. The Practical Planter,

Containing Directions for the Planting of Waste Land, and Management of Wood, with a New method of rearing the Oak. By THOMAS CRUICKSHANK, Forester at Carlisle. 8vo, price 12s.

## 6. Seven Lithographed Designs for the Improvement of Farm Cottages and Steadings, with Descriptions, Specifications, Estimates; Remarks on the Accommodations required under the Modern System of Husbandry, and the Defects of existing Farm Buildings.

JAMES CUNNINGHAM, Surveyor. Price 6s. 6d.

### WORKS BY PROFESSOR JOHNSTON.

## 1. Elements of Agricultural Chemistry and Geology,

the Third Edition, greatly Enlarged, price 4s. This little work is intended to give a familiar and condensed outline of the subjects treated more fully in the Lectures.

## 2. Lectures on Agricultural Chemistry and Geology.

Part I. On the Organic Constituents of Plants. Price 6s. Part II. On the Inorganic Constituents of Plants. Price 4s. 6d. Part III. On the Improvement of the soil by Mechanical Means and by Manures. Price 7s. Part IV.—In course of publication—On Feeding of Stock, &c.

## 3. A Catechism of Agricultural Chemistry and Geology.

Price 10d.

## 4. Suggestions for Experiments in Practical Agriculture.

No. I. Suggestions for Experiments with Unmixed Manures. Price 3d. No. II. Results of Experiments in Practical Agriculture made in 1841. Price 3d. No. III. Results of Experiments in Practical Agriculture, made in 1842, with Remarks and Additional Suggestions. Price 1s. No. IV. Results of Additional Experiments, with Remarks and Suggestions. Price 2d.

## 5. What can be done for English Agriculture

A Letter to the Marquis of Northampton, President of the Royal Society. Price 4s.

45, GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH; 22, Pall-mall, LONDON.

HF

2044

A584

1844

Alison, (Sir) Archiball

Free trade and protection

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE  
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

---

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

---

